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Playing Hesiod

*The 'Myth of the Races' in
Classical Antiquity*

HELEN VAN NOORDEN

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PLAYING HESIOD

This book offers a new description of the significance of Hesiod's 'myth of the races' for ancient Greek and Roman authors, showing how the most detailed responses to this story go far beyond nostalgia for a lost 'Golden' age or hope of its return. Through a series of close readings, it argues that key authors from Plato to Juvenal rewrite the story to reconstruct 'Hesiod' more broadly as predecessor in forming their own intellectual and rhetorical projects; disciplines such as philosophy, didactic poetry and satire all engage in implicit questions about 'Hesiodic' teaching. The first chapter introduces key issues; the second re-evaluates the account in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. A major chapter outlines Plato's use of Hesiod through close study of the *Protagoras*, *Republic* and *Statesman*. Subsequent chapters focus on Aratus' *Phaenomena* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; the final chapter, on the *Octavia* attributed to Seneca and Juvenal's sixth *Satire*, broadens ideas of Hesiod's reception in Rome.

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TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Text and line numbers are cited from the most recent Oxford Classical Texts or Budé edition (as applicable), unless otherwise stated. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated, but I have continuously evaluated my interpretations against the following: for Hesiod, Glenn Most (2006) in the Loeb series; for Plato *Protagoras*, Christopher Taylor (1991) for the Clarendon Press; for Plato *Republic*, George Grube rev. Christopher Reeve (1992) for Hackett; for Plato *Statesman*, Christopher Rowe (1995) for Aris and Phillips; for Aratus, Douglas Kidd (1997) in the Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries series; for Ovid, Frank Miller rev. George Goold (1977) in the Loeb series; for *Octavia*, Tony Boyle (2008) for Oxford University Press; for Juvenal, Susanna Braund (2004) in the Loeb series. (I regret that, submitting this typescript to Cambridge University Press in April 2014, I was unable to make use of Lindsay and Patricia Watson's new edition of Juvenal *Satire* 6 for the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series.)

I have adopted the policy of using English titles for works written in Greek, since by and large these are the most familiar. Otherwise, abbreviations used for collections and editions of Classical texts and for works of reference generally follow those of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow, 4th edn (2012), but the following additions and exceptions should be noted:

- AvPh.* Avienus *Phaenomena* (following A. M. Lewis (1986))
ETCSL *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*.
University of Oxford. <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>
Geo. Virgil *Georgics*
LfrgE *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, Göttingen
1955–2010

Texts, translations and abbreviations

<i>OF</i>	A. Bernabé (2004) <i>Poetae Epici Graeci. Testimonia et Fragmenta. Pars II Fasc. I: Orphicorum et Orphicis similibus testimonia et fragmenta</i> . Munich/Leipzig
<i>OLD</i>	P. G. W. Glare (1968) <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford
<i>Ph.</i>	Aratus <i>Phaenomena</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	Plato <i>Republic</i> [<i>Respublica</i>]
<i>Sat.</i>	Juvenal <i>Satires</i>
<i>St.</i>	Plato <i>Statesman</i> [<i>Politicus</i>]
<i>Th.</i>	Hesiod <i>Theogony</i> [<i>Theogonia</i>]
<i>WD</i>	Hesiod <i>Works and Days</i> [<i>Opera et Dies</i>]

CHAPTER I

APPROACHING HESIOD

Hesiod's *Works and Days* is a veritable gold mine for those who would not inhibit their hermeneutical aspirations. The undertaking is a risky one, however, for often a reexamination of the author or of the passage in question completely upsets one's carefully formulated opinions.¹

1.1 The argument of this book: an 'alternative account'

Just over a hundred verses into Hesiod's *Works and Days*, the speaker follows up an account of Prometheus and Pandora by introducing another version of human history: four human races preceded our own. The first race, of ever-prosperous Golden men, was succeeded by one of Silver, men who stayed children for a century and on reaching adulthood were destroyed by Zeus for impiety. Zeus next created Bronze men who perished by mutual violence, but then made a more just race of Heroes. Some died in war, some flourish still on the Blessed Isles. At this point in the narrative, Hesiod's narrator laments his own place in the present, among corrupt and violent Iron men whose destruction lies in the future.

This intriguing narrative, widely known as the 'myth of the races',² inspired Greek and Roman writers and was reworked throughout the next millennium. Yet although the story of the five races is a candidate for the most influential passage from the Hesiodic corpus, its importance for Classical antiquity requires reassessment. Thus far, discussion of the races has occurred mainly

¹ Lateiner (1930) 70, cited by Nisbet (2004) to herald his provocatively satirical reading of the poem.

² It is introduced as a λόγος (*WD* 106), often translated 'account' (or 'récit' – cf. Calame (2004) 67). In this book I use 'narrative', 'presentation' or 'account' when analysing details, but 'myth of the races' when referring to it as material inspiring a tradition or a response.

within surveys of ancient ideas of paradise³ or time,⁴ ‘Oriental’ myths of mankind⁵ or ‘Greek’ ideas about cultural progress and civilization.⁶ When it comes to Latin texts, the intellectual legacy of the races has been conflated with, or assimilated into, studies of the cultural significance of the Golden Age,⁷ that central myth of Western culture which in fact developed independently out of Hesiod’s idyllic image of a Golden race ruled by Cronus.⁸ Ancient responses to Hesiod’s races, however, range far beyond nostalgia for a lost paradise or hope of its return. This book contends that a scholarly preoccupation with human decline, whose ancient disseminations arguably took inspiration as much from Homer as from Hesiod,⁹ has diverted attention from more subtle ways in which this narrative was interpreted and exploited in antiquity as a specifically Hesiodic tale.

‘Hesiodic’ here means a narrative considered in the first instance as part of a poem (and corpus) attributed to Hesiod, and consequently employed to evoke an idea of this wider work. My focus will be on evidence of interest in the relationship between the five-stage sequence and its first extant context, the ethical argument of the *Works and Days*, in which a speaker, ‘Hesiod’,¹⁰ urges his errant brother Perses and the local magistrates (βασιλεις) towards work and justice. Hesiod presents his case through two stories, allegorical images of justice and injustice, threats, assorted proverbial wisdom and practical instruction. I shall demonstrate, through a series of close readings, that those rewriting Hesiod’s metallic sequence, from

³ E.g. Gatz (1967), and Sourvinou-Inwood (1997) 11 on the ‘blessed isles’ v. Homer’s Elysium.

⁴ E.g. Champion (1994), Feeney (2007) ch. 4 (the latter much more nuanced).

⁵ E.g. Dumont (1965), West (1997).

⁶ Lovejoy and Boas (1935), Havelock (1957) ch. 2, Dodds (1973) ch. 1, Blundell (1986), Gera (2003).

⁷ E.g. Wallace-Hadrill (1982) (on Augustan ideology), Kubusch (1986) and Brisson (1992) (on Latin literature), Barker (1993) (on the ‘goldenness’ of the Golden Age), Evans (2008) (on utopian narratives).

⁸ See Baldry (1953) on the ‘life under Cronus’ in Greek comedy, and for a further Cronus-centred set of twists, Lucian *Saturnalia*.

⁹ See e.g. Gera (2003) chs. 1–3 on Homer’s Cyclopes, recalled by ideas of ‘Golden Age’ communication with animals e.g. in the prologue to Babrius’ Aesopic fables.

¹⁰ The identification is justified by the speaker’s recollection of ‘his’ meeting with the Muses on Mount Helicon (*WD* 659 ‘where first they set me in the way of clear song’), corresponding to their meeting with ‘Hesiod’ in *Theogony* 22–34.

Plato to Juvenal, offer interpretations of the story in some relation to this context. By experimenting with the structure, voice, audience, pace and argumentative function of Hesiod's story, they reconstruct Hesiod's project of instruction in new forms and test the conditions for the success or failure of an utterance with didactic pretensions.

In this way, I argue, the intellectual tradition of the metallic races provides a focused illustration of broader currents in the ancient response to Hesiod.¹¹ Working out the legacy of Hesiod's poetic voice from a point other than the much-imitated scene of his initiation by the Muses, I want to show how rewritings of the 'myth of the races', as a story intriguingly embedded in a didactic poem, engage a wider idea of Hesiodic teaching which spans the *Works and Days*, the *Theogony* and (in Rome if not already in Greece) the *Catalogue of Women*, a poem structured as a five-pronged genealogy encompassing the whole age of heroes.

The reception of Hesiodic poetry as a whole has not often been discussed in relation to that of the races. Analyses of these traditions have converged mainly in studies of the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and Virgil's *Georgics*. By contrast, the bulk of this book seeks to demonstrate that the receptions of the races and of Hesiod intertwine in texts and traditions *other* than didactic poetry. Focusing in particular on the post-Hesiodic manifestations of the races in works by Plato, Ovid, ps.Seneca and Juvenal, it argues that they have much to gain from analysis as part of Hesiod's legacy. There is a chapter on Aratus' enormously popular didactic poem on astronomy and meteorology, but its primary function is to explain how the *Phaenomena*'s intense response to Hesiod does not entirely screen later readings, but allows for and encourages different directions to be taken with the races in its wake.

Each transformation of the account studied here may be viewed as commenting in some respect on the relations between the story and the material that surrounds it in the Hesiodic text. This emphasis is unexpected if one simply adopts the often-repeated scholarly position that both oral and written use of the *Works and Days* in antiquity operated at the level of recalling its distinct ὑποθήκαι ('precepts'). Detailed reworking of stories from Hesiod, however,

¹¹ On those currents, see first Koning (2010) and Hunter (2014).

already implies a greater commitment to reading than taking up a short, separable ‘tag’ such as *WD* 41: ‘the half is more than the whole’. Conversely, the argument that rewriting a Hesiodic story in detail raises wider questions about the didactic mode might be thought unremarkable, insofar as one might expect the interrogation of didactic to emerge as a tendency in the ancient reception of *any* famous story from Hesiod, ‘teacher of the most men’.¹² There have been no such findings, however, in studies of responses to Hesiod’s accounts of Prometheus-Pandora,¹³ a little more has been done with the tale of the hawk and nightingale, which follows that of the races in the *Works and Days*.¹⁴ I suggest that the provocative framing of the races narrative in Hesiod as an ‘alternative’ account of humanity (on which see [ch. 2](#)), as well as its memorable use of the first person (*WD* 174) for the first time in the *Works and Days* since the proem, serve to call attention to questions about the place of *this* story in particular in the corpus attributed to ‘Hesiod’.

The ‘readings’ I uncover in any later author are not necessarily that author’s ‘genuine view’ of Hesiod’s myth; each one is constructed for the rhetorical purposes of the later text. Indeed, the personal and provisional element of every act of appropriation¹⁵ is itself an important principle as a response to the voice(s) of the *Works and Days*. The central emphasis of this book is that there was in Classical antiquity no passive ‘reception’ of the ‘myth of the races’, but a continual rereading of the story, in detail and as a whole, within ‘constructions and reconstructions’¹⁶ of Hesiod’s most famous poem. In seeking thus to characterize the appeal of Hesiod’s metallic races in Classical antiquity, my underlying position is, broadly, not unlike that for which Martindale has argued with regard to the hermeneutics of reception of Latin poetry.¹⁷

¹² As Heraclitus complains (διδάσκαλος . . . πλείστον in Diels-Kranz 22 B57).

¹³ For the (surprisingly scanty) explicit references to Pandora, see Musäus (2004). For a meta-reception of Pandora in antiquity, see Kanaan (2008).

¹⁴ See e.g. Hunter (2014) 241–3.

¹⁵ This principle is memorably affirmed by Hinds (1998) 143–4, concluding his seminal study of the ‘dynamics of appropriation’ in Roman poetry.

¹⁶ Cf. Hunter (2005) on ancient responses to the Hesiodic *Catalogue*.

¹⁷ Cf. Martindale (1993), especially 11–28 on canonicity, first citing MacIntyre (1988) 383: ‘every tradition becomes to some degree a tradition of critical reinterpretation in which one and the same body of texts, with of course some addition and subtraction, is put to the question, and to successive different sets of questions, as a tradition unfolds’.

In this introductory chapter I first sketch different approaches that have been taken to identify a ‘Hesiodic’ project and indicate their relevance for this book. Beginning with the broadest ideas of Hesiod alongside Homer in Greece (section 1.2a), I consider Virgil as a reader of Hesiod (1.2b), the Hesiodic corpus (1.2c) and Hesiod as didactic poet (1.2d). I next identify issues of terminology and narrative shape attached to the races (1.3), then outline the chapters through which this book offers a sample of ancient responses to Hesiod’s famous narrative.

1.2 Identifying a ‘Hesiodic’ project

1.2a Not-Homer

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in Hesiod’s poetry, whose importance for the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome has undergone reassessment on several fronts.¹⁸ Texts such as Aristophanes’ *Frogs* and the extant *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* have been employed to emphasize broad ‘ideas’ of Hesiod governing his popular critical reception. On this level, Hesiod as a teacher is often compared and contrasted with Homer. So in the *Frogs*, when ‘Aeschylus’ is pushed to identify the subjects learned from the great poetic authorities, he names war as the province of Homer, and ‘agriculture, seasons and ploughing’ as that of Hesiod (*Frogs* 1033). This is obviously connected with the view of Homer in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* (§13 West), in which Hesiod was declared the winner, against the popular vote, ‘because it was right for the one calling men to farming and peace to win, not the one recounting war and slaughter’.

In such broadly evaluative contexts, Hesiod is presented first and foremost as the author of the *Works and Days* rather than that of the battle-filled *Theogony*. Another strand of his reception, however, aligned him with Homer as a religious expert; in this context, the perception of Hesiod’s *oeuvre* expands to include the

¹⁸ See Clay (2003) and Bezzantakos and Tsagalis (2006) on the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, Ledbetter (2003) and Stoddard (2004) on the *Theogony*, Hunter (2014) on the *Works and Days*, Hunter (2005) on the *Catalogue* and Montanari et al. (2009) and Koning (2010) surveying the corpus.

Theogony,¹⁹ if not also the *Catalogue of Women*. In this sense, Hesiod is a ‘double poet’.²⁰ Of all the works attributed to Hesiod in antiquity, the *Works and Days* was the most widely cited poem, although numerous papyri of the *Catalogue* attest to its popularity in Greek Egypt. Hesiod’s reputation for wisdom arises primarily from those who mined the *Works and Days* for moral maxims, although the *Theogony* and the *Catalogue* were also used as sources of genealogical information.²¹

Detailed modern studies of Hesiod’s poetry, by contrast, have emphasized both the complexity of the genealogies²² and the unity and variety of perspectives within the poems taken together as ‘Hesiod’s cosmos’,²³ even as they find here a poetics distinct from those of Homeric epic.²⁴ The range of possible implications of the ‘Hesiodic’ label has been explicitly emphasized in the context of its importance (as an alternative to Homer) for Hellenistic and Augustan poets.²⁵ Hellenistic stylistic judgements of Hesiod too present him primarily as ‘not-Homer’, pointing both to the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony*.²⁶ Still, the comparative elusiveness of Hesiod’s poetic texture perhaps comes across from later ancient citations of Hesiod as exemplifying the *medi[um] gen[us]* (‘middle style’) and the *γλαφυρά σύνθεσις* (‘smooth style’), terms which do not translate self-evidently to modern readers. These considerations, especially when read together with surveys of the

¹⁹ Graziosi (2002) 176–7, 180–4; ideas of the Homeric corpus too expanded in these contexts.

²⁰ Rosati (2009) 349.

²¹ On the ancient use of maxims from the *Works and Days*, see Petrakēs (2003). For an overview of the ancient uses of Hesiodic content down to the fourth century BCE, see Buzio (1938).

²² On the social and political rhetoric informing the construction of genealogies such as those of the *Catalogue*, for instance, cf. first Fowler (1998); various potential implications of the *Catalogue*’s organization are brought out by Irwin (2005a) and R. Osborne (2005).

²³ This is the main thrust of Clay (2003).

²⁴ Especially Von Fritz (1962), Tsagalis (2009) and Rengakos (2009).

²⁵ Schroeder (2006) 288–90. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) offer stimulating samples of the diverse receptions of Hesiod in Hellenistic poetry. For Callimachus, see Sistakou (2009). Different senses of ‘Hesiodic’ emerge one by one in the studies of La Penna (1962) and Rosati (2009).

²⁶ See Schwartz (1960) 43–4 on the ‘Hesiodic character’ ascribed by Aristophanes of Byzantium to a catalogue in the *Iliad* (18.39–49 on the Nereids, resembling *Th.* 243–62), Achilles’ story of Niobe (24.614–17) and a gnomic passage of the *Odyssey* (15.74, Menelaus on guests, recalling *WD* 342–3).

different lines of Hesiod's reception, warn against simple definitions of the 'Hesiodic voice'.²⁷

1.2b The Virgilian lens

Apart from statements in prose *about* Hesiod, answers to the question of what 'Hesiod' meant to self-consciously literary communities have focused on the programmatic potential of allusions to Hesiod in Latin poetry of the first century BCE. Most famous is Virgil's *Georgics*, four books of hexameters ostensibly about agriculture, viticulture, cattle and bee-keeping, but incorporating longer and wider perspectives on the contemporary world (29 BCE). This text is our best evidence of sensitive and informed 'reading' of the whole *Works and Days* in this period, integrated with other literary traditions. The fourth-century CE grammarian Servius saw that the *Georgics*' opening indirect questions, *quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram / uertere* ('what makes the crops glad, beneath what star to turn the soil', *Geo.* 1.1–2) recall 'works' and 'days' respectively, and introduce topics covered in *Geo.* 1.43–203 (farming) and *Geo.* 1.204–350 (calendar). Hesiod for Virgil is, as Ovid terms him in *Fasti* 6.14, *praeceptor arandi* ('teacher of ploughing'), and more broadly, the inspiration for emphasizing 'the necessity of expending toil on everything' (*Geo.* 2.61: *omnibus est labor impendendus*).²⁸

What modern analyses have emphasized is the extent to which Virgil's 'Hesiodic' spirit, felt throughout the poem, indicates his distance from the original Hesiod. The most overt declaration of the poem's 'Hesiodism' is the first-person claim (*Geo.* 2.176) to be singing through Roman towns an *Ascraeum carmen*, a song in imitation of Hesiod as 'poet of Ascræ'. Joseph Farrell has argued that by the time of this assertion in the second book, the primary literary inspiration is the *Phaenomena* of the Hellenistic poet

²⁷ Hunter (2009), updated in Hunter (2014), emphasizes the connections between the judgements of ancient rhetorical scholars and the wider tracks of Hesiod's ancient reception.

²⁸ Gale (2000) 156: 'Virgil's insistence on the importance and necessity of unremitting effort is perhaps the one aspect of his poem which enables it fully to qualify for the title *Ascraeum carmen*.'

Aratus,²⁹ whose ‘Hesiodic’ qualities were noted by a fellow-modernizer of Hesiod, Callimachus (*Ep.* 27 Pfeiffer, discussed in [ch. 4](#) below).³⁰ More recently, it has been stressed that Virgil combines Hesiod with Aratus from the outset,³¹ not to mention Lucretius, his nearest predecessor in didactic poetry. The ostensible topics of *Georgics* 3 and 4 are farm animals and bee-keeping respectively; their treatment, notably the extended description of the plague which strikes the cattle, responds to that of Lucretius concluding the *De rerum natura*, while the Lucretian conception of *labor* has been noted as a reference point in every book of the *Georgics*.³² On this reading, the dominance of Hesiod in Book 1 indicates his role as the ultimate source of long tradition.³³

Virgil’s own *Eclogues* already presented Hesiod as the head of a self-consciously literary tradition. Embedded in the sixth *Eclogue* is Silenus’ cosmological/mythological song, whose climax features Hesiod as a kind of Orpheus figure able to move mountains, a channel for the poetic gift. In the song, the poet Linus invites Virgil’s contemporary Gallus to accept the staff that the Muses gave to ‘the old man of Ascræ before’ (*Ecl.* 6.70: *Ascraeo quos ante seni*);³⁴ the reference is evidently to the scene of poetic initiation in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, famously recalled by Callimachus at the start of his *Aetia* and (as Lucretius and Propertius report) by Ennius in the *Annales*:

αἶ νύ ποθ’ Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδασαν αἰοιδὴν,
 ἄρνᾶς ποιμαίνονθ’ Ἑλικῶνος ὕπο ζαθέοιο.
 τόνδε δέ με πρῶτιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπον,
 Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο·
 ‘ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ’ ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
 ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,

²⁹ Farrell (1991) ch. 2.

³⁰ Some argue that *Ascraeum* connotes primarily ‘Hesiod’ as reconceived by Callimachus; they are working back from the use of *Ascrae[us]* in Propertius (2.10.25, 2.13.4 (see below [n. 35](#)), 2.34.77), whose debts to Callimachus are explicit. See Thomas (1988) 6ff.; on Callimachus in Rome, see Hunter (2006).

³¹ Hunter (2014) 20–5, with further bibliography.

³² Mynors (1990), Gale (2000) 155–84.

³³ See La Penna (1962) and the extended discussion following his contribution.

³⁴ On the odd placement of *ante* here, see Scodel (1980) on the biographical traditions of Hesiod’s rejuvenation. Hunter (2001) 248, 253 comments on Hesiod’s old age as a mark of poetic distinction.

Approaching Hesiod

ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.
ὥς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἄρτιέπειαι,
καί μοι σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθηλέος ὄζον
δρέψασαι, θηητόν· ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν
θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα.

One time, [the Muses] taught Hesiod beautiful song while he was pasturing lambs under holy Helicon. And this speech the goddesses spoke first of all to me, the Olympian Muses, the daughters of aegis-holding Zeus: 'Field-dwelling shepherds, ignoble disgraces, mere bellies: we know how to say many false things similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things.' So spoke great Zeus's ready-speaking daughters, and they plucked a staff, a branch of luxuriant laurel, a marvel, and gave it to me; and they breathed a divine voice into me, so that I might glorify what will be and what was before. (*Theogony* 22–32, trans. Most)

With the *Eclogues* in view, this passage from the *Theogony* is striking for its degree of self-reference. With the switch from third person to first person in v. 24, the poetic speaker constructs an autobiography, one to be exploited also in the *Works and Days* (vv. 658–62). Self-consciousness or self-reference in a literary context certainly became a marker of the didactic tradition stemming from Hesiod, as opposed to that of heroic epic in the Homeric tradition.³⁵ Perhaps, then, the use of *Ascraeo* in *Eclogue* 6 works to reinforce the poet's self-placement in a poetic tradition, a move then 'confirmed' by the *Georgics*' re-use of this adjective in Book 2.³⁶

The *Georgics*' development of the image of Hesiod also stems from the fact that its 'programme of allusion' extends to Homer (and for interpreters of the *Georgics*, this passage of the *Theogony* is most often brought into play in the argumentative context of Hesiod versus Homer, as rival claimants for poetic lies and truth).³⁷

³⁵ On Virgilian and Aratean 'signatures' in their poems, see Katz (2008). The poetic *ego* strikingly surfaces in relation to claims of being *Ascraeus*, not only in Virgil *Georgics* (*Ascraeum* . . . *cano*) but also in Propertius (*nondum etiam Ascraeos norunt mea carmina fontes* 2.10.25, and see also 2.13.4: *hic me tam gracilis uetuit contemnere Musas, / iussit et Ascraeum sic habitare nemus*).

³⁶ Such back-reference is supported by the *Georgics*' concluding recollection of Virgil as *Eclogue*-poet (*Vergilium me* (*Geo.* 4.563) combining proper name and first person, like Hesiod at *Theogony* 22–4) and a quotation of that collection's first line (*Geo.* 4.566: *Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi*).

³⁷ In favour of Hesiod, La Penna (1962) and Boyle (1979) 69; Koning (2010) 310–18 argues that Pindar already reflects such a construction of Hesiod as poet of truth. For Hesiod as the embodiment of poetic lies, such as the *Theogony*'s Muses warn they can produce, see Ross (1987) 117–28, Rosati (2009) 350.

In *Georgics* 4, Cyrene, consulted by her son Aristaeus on how to regenerate his hive of bees, instructs him to capture Proteus for advice; Proteus tells Aristaeus the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Hesiodic didaxis, incorporating mythological tales, is the framework here for echoes of Homer’s *Odyssey* 4, *Iliad* 1 and 18, the Hesiodic theogony and even a catalogue of women (in a song of Cyrene’s companion Clymene). By incorporating Homer into the traditions of Hesiodic poetry, Virgil effectively unites different strands of the epic tradition.³⁸ Although the way in which ‘Hesiod travels together with Homer’³⁹ is not the focus of this book, I shall find a precedent in Plato for Virgil’s framing of Hesiod-within-Homer (see [ch. 3](#)).

I focus on Virgil’s *oeuvre* at this point, not because I think that ‘no . . . Roman poets before Vergil were at all interested in Hesiod *per se*’,⁴⁰ but to demonstrate two principles important for this book. The first is the formation of different ‘Hesiods’ from selected elements of his poetry. This point has been made explicitly in studies of Solon⁴¹ and Aratus;⁴² more recently, Gianpiero Rosati’s overview of Hesiod’s Latin reception is structured by the different ideas of Hesiod (such as ‘the poet of wisdom’, ‘the poet of the gods and their loves’, ‘the poet of peace and regret’ and ‘encomiastic poetry / poetry for kings’) created out of selections from the Hesiodic corpus.⁴³ A related point, amply illustrated in studies of Virgil but only recently noted as a principle of Hesiodic reception, is how later authors’ constructions of Hesiod vary from work to work within their corpus.⁴⁴ Through the study of Plato’s corpus in [ch. 3](#), this book emphasizes his role as predecessor for the complex and detailed response to Hesiod already observed in Virgil by others.⁴⁵

The second principle for which Virgil’s *Eclogue* 6 and *Georgics* are worth noting here, before I turn to other ancient responses to the ‘Hesiodic project’, is the centrality of the ‘myth of the races’ to

³⁸ See L. Morgan (1999) ch. 1. ³⁹ For this topic, see first Koning (2010).

⁴⁰ Farrell (1991) 315. ⁴¹ Irwin (2005b) 163–96 on Solon fr. 4. ⁴² Fakas (2001).

⁴³ Rosati (2009); see also Koning (2010) *passim*.

⁴⁴ See Hardie (2005) 287 and Hunter (2014) *passim* for examples.

⁴⁵ See now Gee (2013) 39–48 for a detailed reading of how *Eclogue* 4 builds on Platonic and Aratean reconstructions of Hesiod.

Virgil's reconstructions of the *Works and Days*.⁴⁶ Key to the *Georgics* is the so-called 'theodicy of labour' (*Geo.* 1.121–59), in which it is explained that Jupiter purposefully made life's path difficult for mortals, in order to prevent their sinking into torpor under his rule (*nec torpere graui passus sua regna ueterno* 1.124) – a moralizing spin on the freedom from toil (*WD* 113: νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνου) enjoyed by Hesiod's Golden race. Although lacking metallic terms (and in fact no Virgilian work contains a sequence of metallic races as such), this narrative clearly recalls Hesiod's toil-laden Iron race, for example, in the juxtaposition of the introduction of iron tools (*Geo.* 1.143: *tum ferri rigor*) with a climactic emphasis on the *labor* ... / *improbis* ('wicked toil') which dominates the present era (145–6). Thereafter, elements of Hesiod's narrative, filtered especially by Aratus and Lucretius, are fragmented and repeated across the poem.⁴⁷ A clue to the centrality of the metallic races for Virgil's image of Hesiod is the fact that Virgil's claim to be singing an *Ascraeum carmen* is preceded by a list of the metals naturally occurring in Italy ('streams of silver and mines of copper (*aeris* ... *metalla*) in her veins, and gold ... in her rivers'), juxtaposed with examples of its 'vigorous race of men' (*genus uirum* 2.167).⁴⁸

Indeed, *Hesiod's* narrative of races may provide a structural clue to the difficulty of pinning down the mood of the 'theodicy of labour' and of the *Georgics* as a whole. The characterization of the toil imposed on man as 'wicked' is one of several details that make it hard to understand Jupiter's role as really providential (like that of Aratus' Zeus), let alone well motivated.⁴⁹ The multifaceted world-view communicated in 1.121–59 has become emblematic

⁴⁶ Virgil gathers other pairs of concepts around the Golden/Iron Age distinction; see Nelson (1998) 87.

⁴⁷ For example, the claim that Justice departing the earth left her final traces among the farmers (2.473–4) recalls Aratus' reworking of Hesiod's races narrative around its concluding emphasis on departing goddesses.

⁴⁸ For lists of metals as probable nods to Hesiod's myth of races, cf. Prometheus' speech in [Aeschylus] *Prometheus Bound* 502 and in the 'culture history' of Lucretius *De rerum natura* 5.1241–2.

⁴⁹ Cf. Stehle (1974), Hunter (2014) 23–4. Prometheus' guilt is an absent presence in the account of how Jupiter 'took away fire' (*ignem* ... *remouit* 1.131) for us to find it hidden in veins of flint (1.135). For La Penna (1962) 238, Virgil's justification of Jupiter's action is 'weak' by comparison with Hesiod.

for the wider poem’s shifts of perspective between and within each community on which it focuses.⁵⁰ From the life of the farmers and the hyperbolic ‘praises of Italy’ in Book 2, to the bees and the Corycian gardener of Book 4, Virgil presents and questions the desirability of potentially ‘Golden’ images, in what has been described as a ‘frankly contradictory’ approach to the reality or attainability of *aurea saecula* (golden times) under Augustus in 29 BCE.⁵¹ A recent analysis of the *Georgics*, however, emphasizes that its pessimistic and optimistic voices are not simple alternatives, but constitute a ‘cycle’ and a ‘narrative drama’.⁵² Given this, and the context of metals and races heralding Virgil’s claims to be *Ascræus*, the oscillating structure of the work as a whole perhaps takes inspiration from *Hesiod’s* account of human history, whose discontinuity and inclusion of the ‘better’ fourth race of heroes presents a more complicated picture (see [ch. 2](#)) than the three-stage presentation of moral decline that we find in Aratus’ *Phaenomena*. Not only the contrast between the attitudes to *labor* in *Georgics* 1 and 2, but also the shift from a ‘failure of individual heroism’ observed in Book 3 to a focus on the ‘immortality of the group’ in Book 4⁵³ suggest a large-scale echo of the juxtapositions of Hesiod’s Silver and Gold, hubristic Bronze and ‘more just’ Heroic races.⁵⁴

1.2c Seeing Hesiod whole

I have noted in the *Georgics* both ‘Hesiodic’ themes based on selections from a single poem, and ideas of ‘Hesiod’ that creatively fuse elements of the *Theogony*, *Catalogue* and *Works and Days*. Indeed, a noticeable feature of Hesiodic poetry, unlike that of

⁵⁰ Farrell (1991) 149–51 shows how Virgil exploits these lines as ‘the didactic kernel’ of Hesiod’s poem. On the shifting perspectives of the *Georgics*, see first Batstone (1988).

⁵¹ Perkell (2002) 19, finding it emblematic of an ongoing Virgilian project; cf. Smolenaars (1987).

⁵² Kronenberg (2009a) 157 and more broadly Kronenberg (2009b).

⁵³ Kronenberg (2009a) 166.

⁵⁴ This is not incompatible with seeing a nearer predecessor for such successive suggestions of optimism and pessimism in the resolutely anti-teleological narrative of Lucretius’ culture history (*De rerum natura* 5.925–1457), which exploits both the ‘latent myth’ of Hesiod (Gale (1994) 156–74) and ‘mythemes’ of the Golden Age legend (Campbell (2003)), while denying their traditional application.

Homer, is the way in which each poem as we have it frames itself as part of a poetic corpus. For example, the speaker of the *Works and Days* appears to correct an early genealogy related in the *Theogony* (*WD* 11–12: ‘So then (ἄρα) there was not one birth of Strifes, but on the earth there are two’)⁵⁵ and also to refer ‘back’ to Hesiod’s encounter with the Muses, related in the proem (*WD* 658–9 on success in the poetic contest for which the speaker undertook his only sea voyage: ‘This [tripod] I dedicated to the Heliconian Muses, where they first set me upon the path of clear-sounding song’). The genealogies of the *Theogony* seem to be recalled also in the proem to the *Catalogue of Women*, in what has been called ‘an unattested Hesiodic Cycle of epic poetry’.⁵⁶ The ‘interconnectedness’ of Hesiod’s poetry is also aided by the loose endings of his two major works, onto which seem to have been joined the *Catalogue of Women* and the *Divination by Birds*.⁵⁷

For another example of how ancient thought about the Hesiodic project could apply elements from one poem to the other, we can turn to Lucian’s *Conversation with Hesiod* from the second century CE. In this dialogue, Lycinus has only one complaint for this ‘best of poets’ (1.1): Hesiod has claimed that the Muses inspired him to hymn the past and to prophesy the future [that *Theogony* 22–34 is meant is evident from a reference to the Muses’ gift of a laurel branch], but Lycinus finds only the former task fulfilled. Hesiod has recounted the birth of the most ancient gods, specified female virtues (the *Catalogue*) and indicated the seasons for labour, but on prophecy he has not even begun (1.14). Lycinus demands to know why, since the Muses promised Hesiod knowledge of the future (τὴν τῶν μελλόντων γνῶσιν 2.11).

In reply, Hesiod first declares that poets such as himself and Homer are not to be called to account for every detail, but then instructs Lycinus to read his *Works and Days*, in which he spoke ‘in oracular and prophetic fashion’ (μαντικῶς ἅμα καὶ προφητικῶς) of

⁵⁵ Most (1993) argues that ‘Hesiod’ was the first to establish a relation between *Works and Days* and *Theogony* that only writing could make possible.

⁵⁶ Tsagalis (2009) 159.

⁵⁷ Nelson (2005) 333; see also Cingano (2009) on techniques which ‘weld together’ the two major poems with the others attributed to Hesiod, and the patterns of their circulation in antiquity.

the results of upright behaviour and penalties for neglect (6.16–20). He cites his warning of a bad harvest (*WD* 482), but Lycinus declares that farmers themselves are better qualified to predict this. Prophecy’s task is to recognize in advance what is ‘not at all evident’ (τὰ . . . οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς φανερά 8.15), such as when Troy will fall.⁵⁸ After further mockery, Lycinus concludes the conversation: Hesiod himself knows nothing, so he was indeed inspired, but unreliably so, since the Muses have given only part of what they promised.

Lucian’s dialogue is worth citing particularly here for the fact that the character Hesiod turns to the *Works and Days* as evidence of a claim made in his *Theogony*. One way of reading this is to see Lucian’s acknowledging, although also mocking, that aspect of Hesiodic poetry which encourages the cross-referencing and fusion of his works in reception. Empedocles is one example of such a Hesiodic ‘reader’ who blends allusions to the two major poems;⁵⁹ Aratus and Virgil are others whose joint debts to the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony* permeate the texture of their poems.⁶⁰ I shall argue in ch. 3 for an appropriation in Plato’s *Republic* of Hesiod as philosopher, made through sequential allusions to the openings of *both* the major Hesiodic poems.

Reworkings of the ‘myth of the races’ recall aspects of the *Works and Days* in the first instance, but in each case considered in this book, there are hints also of the wider context of Hesiod’s poetry. To an extent, therefore, the tradition of rewriting the sequence of races provides a focus for considering afresh how the *Theogony* and *Catalogue* are fused with the *Works and Days* in their

⁵⁸ Perhaps a gesture to Homer: cf. Aelius Aristides’ oration *On Rome* (26 Keil, §106) on Hesiod as not μαντικός (‘oracular’) like Homer. Hunter (2014) 32 notes that the *Divination by Birds* attributed to Hesiod may fuel Lucian’s jibe at his ‘claim to special knowledge’. Leaving aside other issues raised by Lucian’s *Hesiod*, we can note that Hesiod’s encounter with the Muses, the potential for contrast with Homer and the idea that the *Works and Days* targets farmers above all were central themes in Hesiod’s popular reception. In meteorology, he was cited in relation to prediction (Taub (2003) 2–3).

⁵⁹ Indeed, Lucian elsewhere (*Icaromenippus* 13) mocks Empedocles’ claims to superior perspective.

⁶⁰ For Aratus, see ch. 4. In Virgil, the instructions in viticulture of *Georgics* 2.288–97, for example, while ostensibly close in subject to the *Works and Days*, are couched in language recalling Hesiod’s account of how Zeus sent the Titans down to Tartarus (*Theogony* 720).

reception, for example in polemics about divinity (the ‘will of Zeus’ in relation to humanity). Particularly in the study of Aratus (ch. 4), I shall reconsider the use of the races as a clue to the ‘world’ created by Hesiod’s poetry. And one extension to Aratus’ readiness to ‘see Hesiod whole’ is the reading of the sequence *Theogony*, *Catalogue* and *Works and Days* as a universal history, from the origins of the cosmos through the age of the heroes to the speaker’s present day. Within Classical antiquity, this presentation of the Hesiodic project is explicit in the didactic poet Manilius,⁶¹ writing under Augustus:

Hesiod . . . tells of the gods and parents of the gods, Chaos in travail with Earth, and after Chaos the childhood of the world . . . He further told of tillage of the countryside and . . . man’s warfare with the soil . . . moreover, a task of peace, he establishes the courses of all the luminaries through the vast heavens so as to further the great designs of nature. (*Astronomica* 2.11–24)

Such an awareness of Hesiod’s corpus frames Ovid’s reworking of mythological and *literary* history, in the *Metamorphoses*, through reading Hesiod’s races (see ch. 5).

Both cosmic scope and the importance of the ‘myth of the races’ as a digressive interlude are noted concerns in the tradition of ‘didactic poetry’.⁶² There is in this book no separate chapter on Latin didactic poetry, since I aim for a snapshot of the variety of ancient responses to Hesiod’s didacticism rather than for a chronologically exhaustive study of this one, very well-known strand of his legacy. However, my study assumes that re-conceptions of the *non*-Golden stages in Hesiod’s races sequence depend crucially on knowledge of Hesiod (as Golden Age narratives do not), and in particular of features of his text that contribute to its status as a ‘didactic’ poem; this topic therefore deserves attention here.⁶³

⁶¹ As Rosati (2009) 361 notes. The succession in Manilius includes the work on astronomy attributed to Hesiod. On Manilius’ reworking of the races and its wider importance for his project, see Gale (2011).

⁶² See Gale (2005) in relation to narrative/heroic epic, Gee (2000) ch. 3 on the Stoic understanding of ‘verse and universe’ in Aratus and Gale (2004a) 53–61 on the cosmological project(s) of Lucretius.

⁶³ For much of the next section, compare the treatment of Hunter (2014) ch. 2.

1.2d Characterizing Hesiodic didaxis

The communication of technical knowledge in a hexameter poem⁶⁴ has been much studied as the didactic legacy of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* in Greek and Latin literature; indeed, one formulation has it that ‘appealing to the authority of Hesiod marks out something as a didactic poem’.⁶⁵ It makes sense to view together as a body of literature the works of such poets as Aratus, Nicander, Lucretius, Virgil and Manilius, who work out their agendas with close reference both to immediate predecessors and to the Hesiodic poems, but the group has suffered from modern attempts to subdivide it by (decisions about) authorial intent and/or style, which have rightly attracted criticism as too schematic, if not circular;⁶⁶ typologies of didaxis were not respected by ancient followers,⁶⁷ let alone by modern scholars.⁶⁸ Further, it has been pointed out that the didactic elements of the *Works and Days* are far outshone by its offerings as poetry.⁶⁹

At the end of the twentieth century, the status of ‘genre’ itself as a critical tool was emphasized and memorably described as a provisional ‘contract’ between writers and readers which forms the expectations against which to read every individual work – the ‘pure’ form of the genre never exists in reality.⁷⁰ This proved a particularly important point for analysing ‘didactic poetry’, which, as is still necessary to underline, is not an ancient generic category. Theoreticians such as Cicero and Quintilian regarded it as a branch

⁶⁴ Exceptions: Ovid’s elegiac *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris* and the *Medicamina faciei femineae*.

⁶⁵ Dalzell (1996) 11.

⁶⁶ Compare Kronenberg (2009a) 6 citing criticism of similar moves to classify forms of satire: ‘the members and the class would define each other’.

⁶⁷ E.g. Kenney (1979) reviewing Effe (1977) critiques his three categories (‘directly’ instructional [of a subject-matter], ‘indirectly’ instructional of a more general theme (‘transparent’), and ‘astonishing’ (‘formal’) poetry) and Effe’s finding (pp. 250–2) that the poetry of Aratus was ‘admired and imitated for the wrong reasons’ (i.e. as an astronomy manual). In general on the variety of aims and styles within this group, see Toohey (1996).

⁶⁸ Scodel (2007) points out that given the influence of New Historicism, ‘we are all likely now to treat didactic poems as ‘transparent’, whether they were composed that way intentionally or not – we are listening for the ideologies that inform them’.

⁶⁹ Heath (1985) 262 judges the poem ‘only formally didactic until *proven* finally didactic’.

⁷⁰ For an overview of the contributions of Conte (1994) and Barchiesi (2001a), see Gale (2004b) xii.

of ἔπος ('epic poetry' more broadly understood),⁷¹ and it is against the background of Homeric poetry that the development of epic poetry may be seen to carry the greatest charge.⁷² Memorable modern formulations include the consideration of didactic poetry as an 'inside out' version of narrative epic, in which passages of advice are no longer inset narratives (such as Phoenix's speeches within the *Iliad*) but the basic surface, while 'stories' (such as the 'myth of races') become the digressions.⁷³

Scholars of post-Hesiodic didactic literature today sometimes start from a more recent classification of Latin didactic poetry proposed by Katharina Volk, consisting of four criteria: 'explicit didactic intent', 'teacher-student constellation', 'poetic self-consciousness' and 'poetic simultaneity' (i.e. the poem is simultaneous with the course of teaching).⁷⁴ Disqualifying Parmenides and beginning with Empedocles, admitting that this follows from the fact that Lucretius chose Empedocles as his model, Volk's approach too has been subject to criticisms of circularity, which she anticipates.⁷⁵ We gain, however, from her emphasis that her criteria are best regarded as formal features rather than with reference to authorial intent, and from her reference (Volk 2002: 43) to other texts 'in the didactic mode' of which the 'genre' she attempts to define is only a specific development.

The concept of the 'didactic mode' is the more promising one to follow up for the reception of Hesiod, whose didacticism is inevitably 'unorthodox' from the viewpoint of his reception.⁷⁶ As Don Fowler terms it, didactic is an ahistorical feature, and defined by the pragmatics of utterance – its primary element is the relationship between speaker and pupil/reader, and (on his reckoning) a 'didactic' plot such as 'progress to knowledge' is a 'secondary element'.⁷⁷ More recently, it has been proposed that we avoid any anachronistic classifications of a didactic poetic genre, instead regarding Aratus and co. as a core group of texts bound by 'family

⁷¹ The evidence is outlined in Pöhlmann (1973) 820–5.

⁷² For an overview of texts and issues in this framework, see Gale (2005).

⁷³ Gale (2004a) 51–2 with reference to Virgil and Lucretius.

⁷⁴ Volk (2002) ch. 2 section 2.2. ⁷⁵ See Kenney (2003), with Volk (2002) 64.

⁷⁶ Cox (1969) 124–5.

⁷⁷ Fowler (2000), noting (207) an ancient debate about how to communicate a τέχνη (practical skill).

resemblance’; this allows us to talk about features they share as well as relationships to other texts which adopt didactic mannerisms temporarily for different reasons.⁷⁸ A similar move has been made in scholarship on satire,⁷⁹ whose relationship to the ‘didactic’ plot will be a focus of my final chapter.

What I should like to emphasize for this book is the capacity of a focus on *Hesiodic* didaxis to draw ‘less than typical connections between different eras and between different genres and modes’.⁸⁰ Such connections, cutting across modern ‘genres’, can of course be made on grounds of content rather than mode. It has been argued, for instance, that ancient poets recognized a category of ‘scientific’ poetry, covering cosmogonic narratives within epics as well as the practical subject-matter of texts more frequently labelled didactic poetry.⁸¹ A purely content-based approach will not of itself convey how it is communicated, however; as other critics have noted, technical material is found in many different forms of writing (including epic and elegy).⁸² Narrative attitudes to the subject-matter (whether or not ‘sincere’) are key.⁸³

With the more flexible concept of ‘didactic mode’ in view, I argue that for each criterion of Volk’s, Hesiod’s voice opens the way for a range of possible responses rather than closing down possibilities. First is the ‘explicit intent to instruct’. In the *Works and Days* is a provocative announcement:

δείξω δὴ τοι μέτρα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
οὔτε τι ναυτιλῆς σεσοφισμένος οὔτε τι νηῶν.

I shall show you the measures of the much-roaring sea, I who have no expertise at all in either seafaring or boats. (*Works and Days* 648–9, trans. Most)

The explanation reasserts the divine source of the speaker’s authority: the one trip the speaker took was to Aulis, where he won a

⁷⁸ Scodel (2007). The text most often cited in this connection is Callimachus *Aetia*.

⁷⁹ Hooley (2007) 142: ‘even in Rome, the hexameter form was not the only way into this modality: comedy, philosophy, streetcorner diatribe, verse invective all did this thing we popularly call satire, if not exclusively, at least some of the time and in some ways’.

⁸⁰ Spencer and Theodorakopoulos (2006) xiv on the theme of advice in Classical literature, although without reference to Hesiod.

⁸¹ Volk (2005). ⁸² Gee (2000) on astronomy.

⁸³ E.g. Gale (2005) 103: ‘Hesiodic’ success relies on a mixture of practical and ethical concerns.

poetic competition and dedicated his victory to the Muses who made him a poet; so he will now communicate the mind of Zeus, ‘for the Muses taught me to sing an inexpressible hymn’ (*WD* 662). With this cross-reference back to the account in *Theogony* 22–34 of initiation by the Muses, Hesiodic didaxis paves the way not only for the tradition of communicators claiming inspiration from Muses (such as Callimachus or Lucretius), but also for Ovid’s reaction to them, the assertion in the *Ars amatoria* that his teaching depends precisely on personal experience (1.29: *usus*), as well as earlier counters to Hesiod in prose. Another Ovidian game with the assertions of a didact, the figure of Pythagoras in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*, will be treated in [ch. 6](#).⁸⁴

Volk’s term, ‘teacher-student constellation’, aptly conveys the dimensions of her second criterion, the speaker’s relation to and deployment of internal addressees. Here, the variety found in the (modern) canon of ancient didactic poetry⁸⁵ and many other strands of advice-giving in Greek and Latin literature,⁸⁶ such as the ‘instruction of princes’, may draw inspiration from Hesiod,⁸⁷ for the *Works and Days* has multiple audiences – Perses (to whom the story of Prometheus is directed), the kings (the knowing audience of a story about a hawk’s power over a nightingale), the onlookers addressed by the farming calendar, and Zeus (in the proem).⁸⁸ The ‘ideal reader’ seems to slide between these categories; it is unclear whether Hesiod’s didaxis expects fully to be understood by its auditors. In addition to the narrative which directs itself in a range of tones to ‘knowing’ kings and ‘foolish’ Perses (see [ch. 2](#)), Hesiod explicitly emphasizes the challenge in understanding the will of Zeus (‘it is difficult for mortal men to know it’,

⁸⁴ Barchiesi (2001b) 67–8 lists the features marking this as a hyper-didactic text; Volk (2002) 64–7 terms this the one passage of Latin literature in which we find a contemporary notion of ‘didactic poetry’.

⁸⁵ See the essays in Schiesaro *et al.* (1993), which reveal the complexity of the ways in which poets such as Parmenides, Empedocles, Aratus, Lucretius, Virgil and Manilius make use of their internal addressee.

⁸⁶ See the essays in Spencer and Theodorakopoulos (2006) for the range; the literature of ‘advice’ includes literature on kingship, dialogues of Plato and historical works of Xenophon, Ciceronian speeches and Senecan letters.

⁸⁷ See Martin (1984) for an argument that passages in Hesiod and Homer share (in) this genre. For complex Latin examples, see Barchiesi (2001c).

⁸⁸ Griffith (1983) 58–9.

WD 484). In Hesiod’s wake, this challenge is rephrased in poetry which combines individual and collective audiences, such as that of Empedocles. Virgil further complicates the matter of higher-status addressees with the much-disputed role of Octavian in the *Georgics* alongside Virgil’s patron Maecenas (invoked early on in every book).⁸⁹

While questions about the accessibility of didactic poetry *per se* are beyond the scope of this book,⁹⁰ I shall argue in *chs. 4–6* that Roman literature builds on ‘Hesiodic’ room for uncertainty in interpreting Aratus’ *Phaenomena*, despite his rhetoric of the openness of Zeus’s sign-system. In the case of Hesiod, images amply illustrate as well as codify his message⁹¹ (most famously, the path of virtue at *WD* 289–92), but his riddling diction persists even when the elite addressees fade out towards the end of the poem.⁹² Meanwhile, the fact that Perses himself in the *Works and Days* is referred to, albeit late in the poem, as Hesiod’s brother, is a feature unparalleled in the usual non-Classical *comparanda* for the poem’s form; such a ‘didactic double’ has been argued as enshrining a more open-ended approach to wisdom,⁹³ which I shall follow up in my study of Plato’s dialogues (*ch. 3*).

Such invitations to interpret as part of Hesiod’s didactic mode bring us back to his poetic identity and to Volk’s third criterion, ‘poetic self-consciousness’. Hesiod’s self-naming as poet, in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, of course distinguishes the tradition of didactic poetry from that of epic (contrast the presence of the poet in the *Georgics* with the absence of such a poetic ‘I’ in the *Aeneid*). Hesiod’s image as author of the didactic tradition is usually taken to

⁸⁹ Nappa (2005) is the main proponent of the idea that Octavian is the primary reader; for Maecenas’ ‘unclassifiable’ status (in the context of a reading of Horace *Satires* 1.6), see Gowers (2009) 305.

⁹⁰ On the ‘honeyed cup’ image of poetry v. prose (Lucretius *DRN* 1.936–50 and 4.1–25), see Kenney (2003); cf. the linguistic study of Gibson (1997), on didactic poetry’s use of ‘popular’ imperatives. Hesiod prefers imperatival infinitives – see Waltz (1906) 173–4, Allan (2010) (arguing from Homer).

⁹¹ Metaphors conveying poetic choices arguably exclude as many recipients as they draw in. See e.g. Muecke (1979) on the multiple possible readings of sailing and path imagery in Lucretius and Virgil. Watson (2003) 485 notes that uncertainty as to whether or not Horace *Epode* 16 is figured speech has led to uncertainty about its meaning.

⁹² On Hesiod’s ‘kennings’ see West (1978) on *WD* 524, 571, 605 (infamously, the identity of the ἀνόστεος, ‘boneless one’ (524), is still uncertain: see Ercolani (2010) on this passage).

⁹³ Martin (2004).

imply *poetry's* power to teach, as in Virgil's *Eclogue* 6, in which Silenus' universal history includes its own lineage from the Muses and Hesiod, poet with the power to move mountains.⁹⁴ Deserving more attention in studies of Hesiod's didactic legacy, however, is the role of the 'myth of the races' in highlighting the poet's voice in a context that questions its power to be heard. In the *Works and Days*, the 'I' (ἐγώ) of Hesiod emerges for the first time since the proem ('as for me, I would tell truths to Perses', *WD* 10) at the point when his message for his contemporaries becomes urgent:

μηκέτ' ἔπειτ' ὠφελλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι μετεῖναι
 ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι.
 νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον· οὐδέ ποτ' ἤμαρ
 παύσονται καμάτου καὶ οἰζύος οὐδέ τι νύκτωρ
 φθειρόμενοι· χαλεπὰς δὲ θεοὶ δώσουσι μερίμνας.
 ἄλλ' ἔμπης καὶ τοῖσι μείζεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν.
 Ζεὺς δ' ὀλέσει καὶ τοῦτο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων.

If only then I did not have to live among the fifth men, but could have either died first or been born afterwards! For now the race is indeed one of iron. And they will not cease from toil and distress by day, nor from being worn out by suffering at night, and the gods will give them grievous cares. Yet all the same, for these people too good things will be mingled with evil ones. But Zeus will destroy this race of speech-endowed human beings too. (*Works and Days* 174–80, trans. Most)

There follow twenty apocalyptic lines, beginning with a specific image: Zeus will destroy this race when babies are born with grey hair (*WD* 180–1). Familial and wider social bonds will collapse and wicked men will overcome the worthy, until eventually Αἰδώς and Νέμεσις will move to Olympus, abandoning mortals to evil. These verses could in fact have been quoted to Lucian's Lycinus as an example of extended prediction in his *oeuvre*, for in sketching the future of the Iron race, Hesiod certainly claims to be privy to the future.⁹⁵ This, his

⁹⁴ Boyle (1976) 25 reads Hesiod in this poem as 'an ideal of didactic efficacy, of song's power and importance', whose actuality in Virgil's own world is scrutinized in the succeeding *Eclogues*.

⁹⁵ Although not in the future tense, cf. also fr. 204 M–W in the *Catalogue of Women*, introducing the plan of Zeus to destroy the race of men. Its image of the snake which bears triplets every three years (91–2) has been thought to allude precisely to the nine-year duration of the Trojan War – cf. Clay (2005) 33–4. Perhaps Lycinus' complaint should recall that the fall of Troy was obliquely 'predicted' in poetry attributed to Hesiod.

grandest moment as poet-prophet, ostensibly his most pessimistic, is what really *requires* the audience to consider how this λόγος functions in its rhetorical context, the exhortation to pursue justice and the instructions to work. What good will be achieved by speaking out? In the wake of Hesiod, I shall argue, rewritings of his races narrative become sites for fusion of poetic and ethical self-reference, in which the speaker’s didactic authority to prevent a general slide into ruin is implicitly both asserted and questioned.

For Volk’s fourth criterion, of ‘simultaneity’ between poem and course of teaching, Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* is the model of a ‘didactic plot’. Hesiod has come in for mockery under this heading, since it takes sympathetic attention to see the coherence of his ethical and practical programme,⁹⁶ which has no rhetoric of being chronologically or topically systematic; moreover, its abrupt changes of tone have been construed as uncontrolled.⁹⁷ My *final chapter* will draw attention to Roman reflections of the apparent disorder of Hesiod’s teaching style, in the development of the genre of satire, viewed as a degeneration of Hesiodic didaxis. The potential for satire in Hesiod’s combination of modes was spotted long ago,⁹⁸ but the junction between satiric and didactic poetry has so far been addressed mainly through Ovid *Ars amatoria*, Horace *Satires*⁹⁹ and Lucretius,¹⁰⁰ although Virgil *Georgics* has recently been added to the list.¹⁰¹

In questions about the framing of material from which internal and external audiences are to draw lessons,¹⁰² Volk’s theoretical framework has proved of some use in sketching out lines of

⁹⁶ See ch. 2 and Nelson (2005). Looking back from Lucretius, Volk (2002) 49 describes Hesiod as ‘a unique, and none too coherent, mixture of genres’.

⁹⁷ West (1978), prompting the (satirical) retort of Nisbet (2004).

⁹⁸ See Rand (1911) 160–5 with reference to earlier authors.

⁹⁹ See Keane (2006) on *Satires* 2 as marginalizing the poet while his acquaintances make forays into didacticism. On the complexities of Horace’s self-positioning, see first Gowers (2011).

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Kenney (1971) 19, introducing the finale to *De rerum natura* 3.

¹⁰¹ Kronenberg (2009a) treats it with agricultural works of Xenophon and Varro as ‘philosophical satire’.

¹⁰² Heraclitus *Homeric Questions* 49 observes the difference between Homer and Aratus on the topic of astronomy (the former no less accurate, but the latter more detailed) with reference to their different objectives. I am grateful to Emily Kneebone for this reference.

Hesiodic reception; still, the twists and turns of Hesiod's discursive mode cannot be captured in this analysis. My discussion of Hesiodic didaxis in [ch. 2](#), therefore, focuses more narrowly on the ways in which the races narrative in particular establishes the parameters of his 'voice', whose dynamics are missed by those who consider Hesiod solely as the source of genealogical information or moral maxims.¹⁰³ My study thereafter emphasizes that post-Hesiodic writers engaging with the account of the races negotiate and respond to the combination of discursive modes within the *Works and Days*, contesting and repeatedly reconstructing the kind of 'didactic' offered by Hesiod and in particular the success or failure of the whole poem as a persuasive act. Writers such as Plato, Aratus and his translators, and the author of *Octavia* will be seen to experiment with the voice that tells the story and those to whom it is addressed, while writers such as Ovid and Juvenal experiment with its framing in and relationship to narrative. With this in view, a focus on the races will offer in some degree an explanation of why it has proved so difficult for modern critics adequately to classify the tradition of 'didactic' literature stemming from Hesiod's *Works and Days*. I prefer to highlight ways in which divergent possibilities in 'Hesiodic' poetry are explored in responses to it.

1.3 Ages and stages, heroes and chronologies

I now turn to two issues spanning ancient interpretations of Hesiod's races, respectively within and beyond the purview of this book. Consideration of different terms for the stages ([section 1.3a](#)) and of the role of the heroes, most often omitted from post-Hesiodic versions of the sequence ([section 1.3b](#)) highlights their importance for (ancient and modern) perceptions of the content, shape and target of Hesiod's narrative. In conclusion ([section 1.4](#)) I shall outline the chapters to come, emphasizing how the races narrative offers the potential for expanding on 'Hesiodic' themes.

¹⁰³ E.g. Petrakēs (2003) on Hesiod's *gnomai* cited explicitly with 'approval' or 'disapproval'.

1.3a *Genetic and metallic terms*

The standard reference point on the reception of the ‘myth of the races’ is still the monograph by Bodo Gatz, who briefly surveys the major ancient revisions of the metallic story and related conceptions such as paradise.¹⁰⁴ The scholarly consensus is that what begins as a myth of human races in Greek literature becomes a myth of ages or eras in Roman literature; in this critical story, Horace’s phrase *tempus aureum* (‘golden time’, *Epode* 16.64) is viewed as an indicator of difference between Greek and Roman tendencies to view the myth respectively as ‘anthropology’ and ‘history’.¹⁰⁵

One acknowledged complication of this trajectory is that after Hesiod, the ‘age of Cronus’ in Greek texts more often functioned as an image of a counterfactual world than as the starting-point of a succession of races.¹⁰⁶ The Peripatetic philosopher Dicaearchus’ *Life of Greece* in 300 BCE seems to have been an exception in employing the paradigm (fr. 49 Wehrli) explicitly as a narrative of mankind’s decline from a self-sufficient state of harmony with nature.¹⁰⁷ It has been argued, too, that in Augustan Rome, the emphasis on ‘ages’ was not so much aetiological as ideological: fuelling the sense of an ongoing crisis put the emperor at the centre of the scheme of things.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the essential difference between Greek and Roman as that between ‘races’ and ‘ages’ is upheld in the most recent overview.¹⁰⁹

A closer look at the extant material reveals that such accounts paper over the range and complexity of the terms used in both Greek and Roman versions of the story. This book will highlight the importance of the fact that in the *Works and Days*, the main term

¹⁰⁴ Gatz (1967).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. e.g. Mankin (1995) 271–2 on this line, citing Gatz (1967) 203–6. Gatz notes (205) that the Greeks viewed the myth ‘theologically’ too – e.g. Pindar *Ol.* 2.61–77, in which the Blessed Isles are reserved for righteous men who have completed three lifetimes.

¹⁰⁶ On Cronus in Greek thought, see Versnel (1993) ch. 2, Vernant and Vidal Naquet in Gordon (1981).

¹⁰⁷ Feeney (2007) 113, noting its ambivalent reception in Varro’s *De re rustica*, which rates the agricultural life over that of the city. On the Dicaearchean fragment see Saunders (2001), and more broadly on possible sources for ‘alternate’ patterns of culture-history in Greece, see Cole (1967).

¹⁰⁸ Wallace-Hadrill (1982). ¹⁰⁹ Feeney (2007) 115–37.

for every stage in the sequence is γένος, which covers both ‘race’ and ‘era’.¹¹⁰ There is a recent argument that ‘kin’ or ‘kind’ is the best approximation in the Hesiodic context,¹¹¹ in my study of its Platonic reworking in the *Statesman* (ch. 3), I shall argue that Plato deploys echoes of Hesiod to expose the (necessary) combination of synchronic and diachronic elements in the sense of a γένος as a natural ‘kind’. For much of this book, however, I shall keep to ‘race’ as the basic translation of γένος, which not only conveys the discontinuity of Hesiod’s sequence but also is an acknowledged translation of some of the Latin terms with which later writers respond.

Certainly, Hesiod’s story provokes questions about how human decline happens, and the transitions between stages are explored in the story’s literary receptions. The first systematic alteration of Hesiod’s terms within a metallic sequence is found in Aratus, who restructures the story as an account of the Maiden’s progressive flight from among mankind to become a constellation (*Phaenomena* 100–36). Aratus speaks first of ‘races’ but then of ‘generations’ of men (γενεή, used as well as γένος for both the Silver and Bronze people). The suggestion of a causal relationship between stages is, however, made already by Plato in *Republic* Book 8 (a text I shall treat in ch. 3), in which Socrates sketches how his ideal city-state (πόλις) could decline into a tyranny through four increasingly unjust forms of government, using the analogy of a father who gives birth to an inferior individual.

An echo of Plato’s presentation of individual decline mapped onto communal transition may be seen in a reworking of the races narrative in the (largely extant) *Aratus*, a translation of Aratus’ *Phaenomena* ascribed to Germanicus Caesar, nephew of Tiberius (c. 14 CE). Where Aratus’ revision of Hesiod’s metallic account spoke only of ‘generations’, Germanicus uses *saecula*, *aetas*, *suboles* and again *saecula* (the latter two in the voice of the disappearing Maiden addressing the Silver men), *proles* (‘offspring’) and *mens* (‘mind, mentality’) to mark four different stages of the

¹¹⁰ On the translation of γένος, see Rosenmeyer (1957) 266, Fontenrose (1974) 1, Calame (2004) 67–8.

¹¹¹ Currie (2012) 41–2.

sequence. It is worth noting that already in Cicero’s discussion of register in declamation, *suboles* is singled out as an archaism and *proles* as a ‘poetic’ term.¹¹² The terms *aetas* and *saeculum* are more widely used, but seem also to have developed a particular resonance in connection with the tradition of rewriting the ‘myth of the races’¹¹³ – this may well be in response to Virgil (see below) or Ovid, whose account exploits a slide between *aetas* and *proles* (see ch. 5). *mens*, however, is unparalleled: in an addition to Aratus, Germanicus introduces the final degeneration, in a mixture of Lucretian terminology and Platonic thought, as the point when ‘the seeds of virtue (*Aratus* 134: *semina uirtutis*) were overwhelmed by vice and could no longer resist it, and the [mortal] mind delighted in the discovery of the metal iron’.

Such a progression in Germanicus, not only from communal to individual, but also (roughly) from temporal to ‘genetic’ terminology probably stems from Virgil, whose fourth *Eclogue* begins to showcase the variety of options for stages of the sequence. Among Roman writers, a striking plurality of terms for ages and races is found in connection with the ‘myth of the races’, but this multiplicity has been acknowledged explicitly only for the Golden Age – by Gatz, and more recently by Barker, who focuses on its ‘goldenness’, with special reference to Virgil, Horace and Ovid. Barker emphasizes the implications of its prominence in Augustan literature:

The dozen or so references of the time suggest not the bland monochrome of cliché but diversity, debate and a willingness to play with the term itself: which suggests that the term itself was not taken for granted. Roman writers and their readers were thinking about what was meant by a ‘Race’ or an ‘Age’.¹¹⁴

Indeed, only *gens* is given the epithet ‘golden’ in Virgil’s *Eclogue* 4, but the poem’s opening exclamation offers *aetas* (‘lifetime / age’), *saeculorum ordo* (‘series of ages / centuries / generations’ – an Etruscan concept),¹¹⁵ *Saturnia regna* (‘rule of Saturnus’), *progenies* (‘progeny’) and *gens* (‘people / race / family’) in the space of

¹¹² Cicero *De Orat.* 3.153.

¹¹³ OLD s.v. ‘*aetas*’ and ‘*saeculum*’ assigns distinct categories to their meanings in this context.

¹¹⁴ Barker (1993) 5.

¹¹⁵ On the history of the *saeculum* in Rome, see e.g. Du Quesnay (1976) 40.

six lines. As Barker has noted (in relation to the ‘age’ of gold), the terms *gens*, *saecula* and *aetas*, together with *genus* (‘race / nation species / generation’), but not *tempus* (‘time’), preserve to varying degrees the ‘genetic element’ of the Greek term γένος.¹¹⁶ I observe that Virgil’s sequence makes this aspect increasingly prominent as the narrator juxtaposes the start of a new era with the birth of a single boy (*puero*, later strikingly apostrophized *cara deum suboles*, *magnum Iouis incrementum* (49) – ‘beloved offspring of the gods, great progeny of Jupiter’).

The negative form of this political juxtaposition of individual and era is raised by a reverse shift of terminology, in the (probably post-Neronian) *Octavia* (to be treated in ch. 6). This play contains a monologue by the character Seneca on world / human history. In his account, *genus*, *stirpem* (‘stem / stock’), *regna*, *suboles*, *genus*, *aetas* and *saeculo* appear in quick succession (vv. 391–432). Uttered just before the aggressive entrance of the character Nero, Seneca’s sequence twists (by now) traditional terms for the stages in the other direction, to renew the thought exploited first by Augustus: how far can the actions of individuals change the experience of entire communities and even embody an ‘era’?

I shall point out (ch. 2) that the potential for both the optimistic and the pessimistic versions of this question may be found in Hesiod’s ‘myth of the races’, read in the context of what follows in the *Works and Days*; portraits of just and unjust cities, in which just kings bring about communal prosperity while one unjust man can drag a city down. My sketch of the Roman evidence, above, suggests that it is the progression of γένη, not the Golden race alone, which was a site of interpretative experiment regarding human potential for and ability to resist change. In the course of this book, various labels for the stages are shown to be subjected to different pressures at different points. My contention is that for later writers, *Hesiod’s* races are worth recalling not so much for his perspective on the Golden race / era as for his diverse visions of non-ideal communities in the past, present and future.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Barker (1993) 3.

¹¹⁷ Cf. the opening to Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*: ‘Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.’

Such a focus also grants the myth a wider relevance in Hesiod’s own poem, insofar as it may be seen as part of his variegated emphasis on working out one’s days in the reality of an imperfect society. Another clue towards such an ahistorical interpretation is the presence of the metallic terms themselves; they prompt questions about the extent to which the story is to be considered a kind of allegory, despite its designation in Hesiod as a λόγος (*WD* 106), the first extant use of this term in the singular,¹¹⁸ which has encouraged comparisons with ‘history’.¹¹⁹ This book will point out that our classifications and/or judgements of the function(s) of races narratives in different contexts are affected, not only by the degree of continuity suggested by the terms for the different stages of a sequence, but also by the presence or absence of metallic labels for those stages. *Ch. 6* will suggest, among other points, why the ‘golden’ label is *not* employed in the post-Augustan texts on which I focus.

Conversely, as I hope to make clear, the meaning or ‘point’ of the metallic labels depends on the shape of the story and the extant rhetorical as well as cultural contexts. We may contrast Hesiod’s account with a much-studied metallic narrative that *explicitly* requires interpretation: that of *ch. 2* of the apocryphal Book of Daniel.¹²⁰ In this text, Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylon, has a dream he cannot understand: a vision of a huge statue with a head of gold, arms and upper body of silver, lower torso and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay; a stone comes out of nowhere, shatters the feet of the statue and destroys all the metals, then grows into a mountain and covers the whole earth. The Jewish prisoner Daniel prophesies from the dream a sequence of kingdoms, of which the fourth will be strong like iron but weak in parts like clay. Then the kingdom of God will arise and establish itself on earth for ever. On hearing this,

¹¹⁸ Verdenius (1985) on *WD* 106.

¹¹⁹ See first Currie (2012) with further bibliography. In Hesiod, the challenge of interpreting this λόγος involves not only comparison with the foregoing story of Pandora, but contrast with the following tale of the hawk and the nightingale, termed αἶνος (*WD* 202) – see *ch. 2* below.

¹²⁰ For a brief, but suggestive, comparison of the two stories, cf. Calame (2004) 94–6, focusing on the position of the speaker in each text.

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges God and appoints Daniel to high rank in the realm.

Whereas Hesiod presents the Golden race as god-like in their eternal strength and prosperity and receiving ‘kingly’ honour as spirits after death, all the metals in Daniel are said to symbolize earthly kingdoms – Nebuchadnezzar is the golden head because of his power rather than his royalty.¹²¹ Again, in contrast to the sequential destruction narrated in Hesiod, Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of simultaneous destruction of all the metals suggests (to Daniel and to the external audience) that the real point to remember is not how humanity gets from A to B but, rather, the blunt truth that the kingdom of God will eventually be established on earth. Indeed, the *lack* of concern for a particular chronology in Daniel 2 may be inferred from the fact that in Daniel’s interpretation of the metallic sequence, only Nebuchadnezzar is explicitly identified.

By contrast, the order of the sequence seems to matter for most of the pagan ancient authors rewriting the story, even though they frame and re-allocate its details towards different ends. Various intermediate stages may be omitted, but in sequences that specify more than one metallic label, Hesiod’s order was not explicitly disturbed¹²² – gold never comes after silver or bronze, silver never after iron¹²³ – until Virgil in *Eclogue* 4 stated that the Golden Age was due to return and in the *Aeneid* (8.321–5) re-situated the Golden Age as the *second*, agricultural stage of humanity, a civilization of the initially crude (hard, primitive) race (see [ch. 5](#)).

Hesiod and Daniel may be compared, however, for the change in their interpretation in modern times. Daniel 2 was read for centuries

¹²¹ Carrière (1996) 427 finds the ‘royal’ symbolism of these metals ‘an index of Hesiodic influence’. Yet a very similar succession of four future pagan kingdoms is represented in Daniel ch. 7 by a first-person vision of four *beasts*, interpreted by an angel (see also the visions in Daniel chs. 8 and 10–12).

¹²² Setting aside Empedocles’ cyclical, non-metallic version of human history inspired by Hesiod’s account (see especially DK 31 B128); the myth of eternal cosmic reversal in Plato’s *Statesman* I think can audaciously collapse different Hesiodic stages (ch. 3) precisely because it avoids metallic terms. In the ‘noble lie’ of Plato’s *Republic* 3, Bronze and Iron are on the same (lowest) level, not reversed in hierarchy.

¹²³ In Lucian’s *Tragic Zeus*, fuss over the hierarchy of the statues of the gods (sect. 7) gains a humorous point in light of this aspect of the tradition of metallic races.

as a guide to political history and messianic chronology¹²⁴ before critical discussions began to emphasize that real history is not in question;¹²⁵ rather, the story expresses the hopes and fears of the Jewish people in the early to mid second century BCE, during the persecutions of Antiochus IV in Palestine.¹²⁶ Hence, it has been suggested the metals of the statue represent those of idolatry, since a Jewish editor of traditional metallic imagery would be 'concerned less with the future rule of the world than with the transcendent power of God to destroy all idols and the human kingdoms which worship them'.¹²⁷ Reference to the wider frameworks of the story, both within and beyond the text, drastically affects judgement of its metallic terms.

A parallel shift has occurred in modern interpretation of Hesiod's metallic narrative. The sequence of Gold, Silver, Bronze, Heroic and Iron humans evidently complicates the message of irreversible decline set out by the foregoing story of Pandora. As such, it was first declared to have been imperfectly adapted from a four-part 'oriental' metallic myth of decline posited behind both Daniel 2 and an account of a metallic tree in the Persian Bahman Yašt.¹²⁸ Given the impossibility of certainty as to 'influences' on Hesiod, however, the debate in its original form is now almost extinct. Even if the relative value and symbolism of the metals in the Near East were clear and consistent (which we have no right to assume; indeed, a Sumerian 'dispute' poem has 'silver and mighty copper' argue their respective merits),¹²⁹ pinning down the source is

¹²⁴ Collins and Flint (2001) 1. Its interpretation as a *post euentum* prophecy of the kingdoms of Babylon, Media, Persia and Macedonia / Greece (overriding another longstanding tradition of viewing the fourth empire as that of Rome) persisted despite the fact that this sequence does not correspond to the facts of history as known from reliable sources (see Rowley (1959)). The same sequence, with Rome as the *fifth* empire, is found in Polybius, Dionysus of Halicarnassus, Tacitus and Appian.

¹²⁵ E.g. Hartman and Di Lella (1978) 31.

¹²⁶ Collins (1993) 162 and Koch (2005) 132 interpret the appearance of the kingdom of God as a Jewish 'correction' of a Near Eastern schema of four kingdoms essentially designed for anti-Hellenistic propaganda, and originally implying a hope for the restoration of native kingdoms.

¹²⁷ Collins (1977) 43–4, noting that in Daniel ch. 3, an image is rejected by the Jewish heroes, and Daniel 5.23 deals with idol worship.

¹²⁸ Reitzenstein (1924/5); further bibliography in Most (1997), Bezantakos and Tsagalidis (2006) 32–138.

¹²⁹ See <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.5.3.6#> for t.5.3.6 in *ETCSL*. Cf. Sauzeau and Sauzeau (2002) for a sceptical overview of the evidence for metallic and colour codes current in the cultures which might have influenced Hesiod.

acknowledged to be less productive than considering the uses to which the material is put as part of Hesiod's text.¹³⁰ This, indeed, is the real issue for the current study, since it is the level on which self-consciously post-Hesiodic texts respond, whether or not they *also* look to 'Eastern' or other traditions.¹³¹

More recent readings of the races narrative in Hesiod have shown how it functions structurally to introduce the terms of the moral choice between δίκη and ὕβρις that Hesiod goes on to urge explicitly (for details, see ch. 2). With this general goal in view, we may wonder what for Hesiod *is* 'golden', 'silver', 'bronze' or 'iron' about the past and present human races. This was a question asked and answered variously in antiquity.¹³² Already Plato's *Cratylus* (398a) explicitly raised it in relation to Hesiod's 'Golden race', in which gold itself seems to have played no part. Plato's cerebral interpretation may have precedent in the Orphic poems, which contain their own version of metallic succession, composed, as most commentators think, after Hesiod, to establish Zeus as the creator of humankind (but the fragments are inconsistent). Fr. 140 Kern / 159 Bernabé (= Proclus *On Plato Republic* II. 74) mentions a Golden race created by Phanes, a Silver race created by Cronus and a Titanic race created by Zeus from limbs of Titans. According to Proclus (*On Hesiod Works and Days* 127–9 = Fr. 141 Kern / 216 Bernabé), the Silver race is said to live 'according to pure *Logos*', while the Golden race live 'in accordance with *Nous* alone'.¹³³ There has been much speculation about Orphic influence on Plato in other contexts,¹³⁴ but since interpretation of the

¹³⁰ See e.g. Crubellier (1996) 434 n. 9, and Brown (1998) 385, who firmly lays aside as unhelpful the polarization of opinion about attributing difficulties to Hesiod's unskilful adaptation of 'alien material'. The same principle holds, of course, in evaluating the responses to *these* texts on their own terms; I think particularly of the translations of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, on which see ch. 4.

¹³¹ Cf. Nisbet (1978) on Virgil *Ecl.* 4, and on Ovid *Metamorphoses*, below ch. 5 n. 96.

¹³² Hunter (2014) 5 and *passim* observes that modern criticism of Hesiod often follows ancient tracks.

¹³³ For orientation see West (1983) and for the relevant fragments, Bernabé (2004) 151, 187, 262. Baldry (1952) 87 treats the Orphic metallic sequence as a deliberate divergence from Hesiod; Gatz (1967) 52–3 is more cautious.

¹³⁴ Focused above all on the *Phaedo*: see e.g. Edmonds (2004) chs. 2 and 4.

Orphic races requires so much reconstruction, they are not part of this book.

Another strand of thought in antiquity appears to have invoked Hesiod’s symbolic ranking of gold and ‘much worse’ silver for a ‘language of metals’ according to which a moral charge was attached to refined gold. It has been argued that Theognis and other later archaic poets describing social relations suppress mention of coinage since its ‘exchangeable’ value posed a threat to the ‘essential’ value of the elite, expressed as precious metals.¹³⁵ Later on in antiquity, by contrast, these first two races were taken as scientific allegory. As Plutarch explains, constancy is expressed by the Golden race ‘always the same in hands and feet’, while those who live a very long time as children at home, but rapidly decline when out of that enclosure, express the tarnishing of silver in air or cold water.¹³⁶

The allegorical implications of the ‘bronze’ and ‘iron’ labels in Hesiod’s narrative are still more debateable, perhaps because Hesiod’s text, emphasizing the ‘Bronze’ men’s use of bronze rather than iron weapons and tools (*WD* 150–1), forbids an understanding of this metallic label as *simply* an allegory for human character. Iron is associated with hardness in Homer (*Odyssey* 19.211: the eyes of Odysseus, although he pitied Penelope, were fixed ‘like horn or iron’), but in Hesiod’s sequence, the ‘Iron’ race is characterized as much by duplicity as by resistance or even aggression (and this seems to be why it is worse than the Bronze race). This book will point out how Aratus and his translators (variously) re-allocate such features of mortal existence to different stages of their sequence, depending on the moral they wish to draw. In my view, post-Hesiodic flexibility in treatments of Silver, Bronze,¹³⁷ heroic and Iron races is because of the *belatedness* of the moral framing in

¹³⁵ Kurke (1999) 36, developing Kurke (1995) e.g. 44: ‘the medium through which the noble self and its proper relations are thought and articulated’. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* itself, composed before the invention of coinage, has no use for this ‘language of metals’.

¹³⁶ In Σ 127–9 Pertusi (1955) 54–5. On Plutarch’s interpretations of Hesiod, see Koning (2010) *passim*, Hunter (2014) 167–226.

¹³⁷ One of these two is usually presented as a transitional stage, characterized by comparative adjectives, such as ‘more unsightly’ (*deformior*, Germanicus *Aratus* 120 of the Silver race) or ‘more savage’ (*saevior*, Ovid *Met.* 1.126, of the Bronze race).

Hesiod's text; it is only really with *WD* 174–6 ('I wish I were not among the fifth men . . . for now the race is indeed one of iron') that a metallic label is brought out overtly as a moral metaphor.

In the wake of Hesiod, too, the literal and metaphorical powers of the metallic label are held in tandem, most notoriously by Ovid in relation to the Golden time (e.g. *Ars amatoria* 2.277–8: 'Now truly are the *saecula* golden: the greatest honour comes by gold, with gold you can win over love'), but already too in Virgil's *Georgics*. For example, the syntax of *Geo.* 1.143–4, on technological progress (*tum ferri rigor atque argutae lammina serrae* – 'then [came] the hardness of iron and the blade of the rasping saw') plays with the negative associations of the 'age of iron' before it emerges that Virgil is referring more literally to iron tools.¹³⁸ This text never formally applies metallic terms to races or periods of humanity,¹³⁹ but it is the main point of reference for Romans playing 'Hesiod' through versions of the races.

1.3b The heroic vein

Such play with terminology may be encouraged also by the fact that one of the stages in Hesiod's sequence lacks a metallic label. The heroic race is introduced, following the demise of the Bronze race, as Zeus's creation, 'more just and superior, the godly race of men-heroes, who are called demigods (ἡμίθεοι), the generation before our own upon the boundless earth' (*WD* 158–60). It is often noted that this stage is usually omitted in later versions of the races narrative which employ metallic terms; this is argued to be because the presence of 'more just and superior' heroes in Hesiod's sequence complicates its interpretation as a story of progressive human decline.¹⁴⁰

On one level this is true, but some of those later versions are influenced by other post-Hesiodic texts which may be seen actually

¹³⁸ Compare *Geo.* 1.503–4, *ruuntque / in ferrum* – 'they rush to iron [weapons]' – and the description of 'iron laws' (*Geo.* 2.501), on which Thomas (1988) on this line comments that laws in Rome were written on bronze, so rather 'the cultural sense of [iron] is here active'.

¹³⁹ Johnston (1980) 49 argues that metallic labels were for Virgil too 'deterministic' to be applied to human history in the *Georgics*.

¹⁴⁰ So Most (1997) 105.

to expand ideas conveyed in Hesiod through reference to the heroes. Consider, for example, Lucretius’ Epicurean ‘culture history’ in *De rerum natura* 5, which teasingly evokes but frustrates expectations of a narrative of decline from a Golden Age and the whole notion that human history may be cleanly divided into periods (see ch. 5). Lucretius’ account redeploys details of Hesiod’s metallic stages; it ignores the race of heroes,¹⁴¹ but Lucretius has already substituted for the traditional ‘history of civilization’ a hero of his own – Epicurus, introduced as the first man to have withstood the threat of *Religio* (Superstition) (*DRN* 1.62–79).¹⁴²

More broadly, too, Lucretius’ poem evidences Hesiodic influence in its interplay between traditions of ‘heroic’ and ‘didactic’ epic. It is with the introduction of the heroes that Hesiod himself first finds a place within his *Works and Days* for the material of heroic epic¹⁴³ and also indicates his distance from its treatment there. The word ἡμίθεοι, the collective epithet of this generation, marks a retrospective view from a point distant in time, characteristic of the scope of Hesiodic poems but found only once in Homer (at *Iliad* 12.23, as the narrator observes that the defensive wall built by the Achaeans is no longer visible following its destruction by the gods after the war).¹⁴⁴ Hesiod’s synoptic view of ‘the generation before our own’ distinguishes his account both from the future cast of most other surviving metallic schemes¹⁴⁵ and from Homer’s perspective on the past; later too in the *Works and Days*, an appropriative and antagonistic relationship with heroic poetry about the Trojan War has been detected both in content and in diction.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Gale (1994) 172 argues that such a distinct generation would be too schematic for Lucretius.

¹⁴² For Lucretius, Epicurus’ arrival is the only turning point in history; see Furley (1989) 209.

¹⁴³ Matthiesen (1977) helpfully emphasizes that this material too, like the concept of metallic races, comes from a cultural circle spanning both Greece and the Near East.

¹⁴⁴ On this passage and the varying accounts of Zeus’s plans for humanity, see Scodel (1982).

¹⁴⁵ Tsagalis (2009) 145.

¹⁴⁶ On *WD* 651–7, see first Nagy (1982); contrasting the *Iliad* in particular, see Carrière (1996) 411–12.

The presence of the heroic race is ‘Hesiodic’ also in a different sense; it encapsulates a message of the wider narrative of races in the *Works and Days*, insofar as the creation and passing of the heroes ‘recapitulates the sequence of closeness and separation between men and gods that is implicit in the myth as a whole’¹⁴⁷ (cf. *WD* 108: ‘from the same source have there come into being gods and mortal men’). This idea also book-ends the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*; fr. 1.6–7 M–W concerns the joint feasts of men with gods, and fr. 204.94–105 M–W, on the beginning of the Trojan War, mentions Zeus’s decision that the gods [or their children] ‘henceforth apart from humans should have [life and] habitations’. It is implied that this event was the end of the human-divine interaction that produced the generation of heroes.¹⁴⁸

Such a ‘moral’ about the Heroic Age is picked up, via Aratus, in Catullus 64, the epyllion (miniature epic) on the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, an important precedent for Roman authors in reading together Hesiodic texts. Catullus’ poem concludes (382–408) by situating the wedding *quondam* – ‘in a former time’, when gods visited the ‘pious homes of heroes’ (384–5), until humans turned to intra-familial slaughter, which ‘turned from us [*nobis*] the righteous will of the gods, who no longer deign to visit our companies’ (406–7). In the wake of Aratus’ moralizing spin on the races narrative, this fuses the departure of the goddesses Shame and Indignation from among men, which concludes Hesiod’s account of the Iron race in the *Works and Days* (*WD* 197–200), with the references to divine-human intimacy framing the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, which begin the genealogies of the Heroic Age and which Zeus brings to an end.¹⁴⁹

Such a retrospect on the heroic age provides the *Catalogue*’s overarching chronology, but, as in the *Works and Days* itself (pp. 44–5 below), the poet inserts into this grand narrative other paradigms of the essential contrast between the past and the present, between the divine cosmos and human suffering – in this

¹⁴⁷ So Thalmann (1984) 103. ¹⁴⁸ Compare e.g. *Cypria* frg.1 *EGF*.

¹⁴⁹ Pontani (2000) 275, noting that Catullus 64 and the *Catalogue* are the only two extant texts to refer to theoxeny as the main feature of the heroic age. Zetzel (1983) notes (261 n. 28) Catullus’ concluding allusion to the *start* of the *Catalogue* as an ‘Alexandrian’ reversal of ends and beginnings.

case narratives of Deucalion and Pyrrha, and of the life of Heracles, presented in reverse order. Such juxtapositions encapsulate the quality of the *Catalogue of Women* (and every major Hesiodic poem) as a 'prismatic narrative with multiple temporalities, voices and registers'.¹⁵⁰

Catullus 64 is in any case the most important example of post-Hesiodic play with 'prismatic narrative' specifically in relation to the heroes' place in human history. It has long been noted that the nested narratives of Catullus' epyllion form a 'chronological labyrinth' in which it is difficult to distinguish, let alone to evaluate, past ages in relation to the present.¹⁵¹ We begin with the sailing of the first ship (the Argo – the traditional starting-point of the Heroic Age) from which Peleus first spied the nymph Thetis. Yet, at their nuptial celebrations, the coverlet on the wedding bed commemorates Ariadne abandoned by Theseus, who departs 'with a swift ship' (Cat. 64.53).¹⁵² The opening scenes themselves are marked by 'temporal hyperreality'; as farmers in Thessaly stop their work and flock to the wedding celebrations, the poet's emphasis on the sudden cessation of ploughing (38–41) promises a new Golden Age of spontaneous production; instead, 'rust creeps over the deserted ploughs' (42), fast-forwarding the readers to a time of decay.¹⁵³ Towards the end of the poem, the destruction to be wrought by Achilles, prophesied by the Fates at the wedding (338–70), belies the happiness (382: *felicia*) they promise to his father Peleus. The effect is that the time at which the heroes were born, 'a time of ages, too much desired' (22: *nimis optato saeculorum tempore*) degenerates into a time 'continuous with our own depravities', leaving readers with a real question about the time of partition.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Tsagalis (2009) 160, citing Haubold (2005) on Heracles in the *Catalogue*.

¹⁵¹ Gaisser (1995).

¹⁵² O'Hara (2007) 35–6 notes this inconsistency in relation to the 'first' sea voyage.

¹⁵³ Evans (2008) 170.

¹⁵⁴ Feeney (2007) 126 noting the repetition of 'first' and 'last' times (*tempore* in 151, 171, 191); cf. Curran (1969) on 'essential similarity' between past and present. Fitzgerald (1995) 140–69 argues that Catullus' emphasis on the departure of the mortal guests before the gods arrive (64.265–77) equates the experience of distance from the gods to our own nostalgia in creating the heroic age in myth. Compare Morris (1997) on our own historical periodization in connection with the concept of a heroic age.

Virgil too seems to have been inspired by ‘Hesiodic’ multi-temporality focused on the heroes. The prophecy of a returning Golden Age which opens *Eclogue* 4 is a bold montage of suggestions of different systems of time-reckoning (Jewish/Sibylline in v. 4, Stoic and Italic/Etruscan in v. 5, Hesiodic and Aratean in vv. 6–9, Orphic ages in v. 10) alongside the birth and maturation of a person who will witness ‘heroes mingling with gods’ (vv. 7, 15–16, 18–36).¹⁵⁵ The *Georgics* too presents, in succession, different long-range explanations of the current imperative to toil – Deucalion’s creation of a ‘hard race’ from stones and, only fifty lines later, Jupiter’s decision to bring an end to the primeval era of ease. In Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, the heroes introduce a different view of humanity within a narrative already introduced as ‘alternative’ to the preceding story of Prometheus and Pandora (ἔτερο[ς] *WD* 106); they alert us to look in Hesiod’s most famous receptions for such reflections on the shape and compatibility of different mythical chronologies of humanity’s past.

One further issue arising from Hesiod’s Heroic race is the potential for a return of Golden Age prosperity. Scholars of Hesiod have long debated whether or not Hesiod himself anticipates a return of happier times, since he introduces himself among the fifth race of men with the wish either to have died earlier or to have been ‘born later’ (*WD* 175). However, it has been pointed out, with an eye to Virgil’s *Eclogue* 4, that the idea of a ‘rerun’ of the Golden Age is in fact built into the fabric of the *Works and Days*, insofar as the heroes’ afterlife on the Blessed Isles, which produce fruit three times a year (*WD* 172–3) recalls the supernatural fertility enjoyed by the Golden race.¹⁵⁶ A similar case could be made regarding the echoes of such prosperity found in Hesiod’s following portrait of the Just City (*WD* 225–37: see pp. 66–7 below). Certainly, the fact that in *Eclogue* 4 a second Heroic Age, with attendant wars, is prophesied (vv. 31–6) as a necessary step towards the return of the

¹⁵⁵ See Breed (2006) 143 on the blend of aetiology and disjunction in these chronological frameworks, repeated at the level of literary history through echoes of the Fates’ prophecy in Catullus 64 (*‘talía saecla’ suis dixerunt ‘curríte’ fúsis / ... Parcae* (*Ecl.* 4.46–7); here, Virgil offers a ‘fiction of quotation’ which both ‘signals the possibility of connection to the past and formalizes the disjunction from it’.

¹⁵⁶ Evans (2008) 43.

supernaturally fertile Golden Age could indicate Virgil’s acknowledgement of the way in which Hesiod’s heroes bring with them recollections of ‘golden’ prosperity. Additional details in the *Eclogue* of the forthcoming bucolic paradise, such as lack of sailing (38–9) and the spontaneously colour-changing fleeces of the sheep (43–5), stem ultimately from Hesiod’s Just City.¹⁵⁷ This book will make clear that from the viewpoint of Hesiod’s ancient receptions, the debate about Hesiod’s intentions is immaterial; a concept such as that of a returning Golden Age can find a seed in a small phrase,¹⁵⁸ let alone from more evident rhetorical suggestions of Hesiodic repetitions, such as those between the prosperity of Golden, heroic and just men.

Pindar’s *Olympian* 2 is the first extant post-Hesiodic text to make something new of the significant repetitions between descriptions of the Golden race, heroic afterlife and justice-born rewards. This text, according to which those who persevere in trying to keep their souls pure are granted after a cycle of three deaths a pleasant existence with the possibility of escape to the Blessed Isles (vv. 68–80), seems to have combined Hesiodic features with the eschatology of the Orphic poems whose influence has been detected in Plato.¹⁵⁹ Pindar’s poem also stimulates traditions of a contemporary but geographically distant ‘golden’ race, reflected in ethnographic and satirical writing,¹⁶⁰ and, of course, the tradition of the Blessed Isles themselves, which is beyond the scope of the current study. Again, this book does not pursue the independent tradition that grew up around the post-mortem fates of the first four races in Hesiod’s story, which for Rohde were the real basis of the myth.¹⁶¹ The δαίμονες (‘daemons’, ‘spirits’) into which the Gold and Silver men are transformed certainly acquired authority in Greek religious belief,¹⁶² but the vast majority of post-Hesiodic revisions of the

¹⁵⁷ The sheep with luxuriant fleeces (*WD* 234) are not in Aratus, but the lack of sailing is likely derived from Aratus’ reading Hesiod’s Golden race with the Just City (*WD* 236–7 with *Ph.* 110: ‘the sea lay far off’).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Hunter (2014) 16, citing Dio Chrysostom’s *Euboean Oration*.

¹⁵⁹ On the potentially eschatological elements of Hesiod’s poem, see Currie (2007) 167–85.

¹⁶⁰ See first Romm (1992). ¹⁶¹ See Rohde (1925) 70–9.

¹⁶² Solmsen (1962) 184 notes that they were subject to ‘dogmatic corrections’. See Blakely (2006) for a comparative study of the myths and rituals associated with Greek δαίμονες as founders of metallurgy.

narrative of the races do not focus on the afterlives of the early races as δαίμονες; they emphatically present descriptions of *lives*.¹⁶³

1.4 Reading the races in Hesiod, and Hesiod in the races

Using Virgil's reading of Hesiod in the *Georgics*, I demonstrated two principles important for this book: the way in which ideas of Hesiod are recalled alongside close readings of his poetry, and the interest in the status of the races narrative embedded within the larger work. Virgil is not, however, unique among Latin authors in this respect. Given the weight of existing scholarship, priority has been given in this book to other texts that can be shown to explore the function of the intermediate races in Hesiod's sequence as well as its start- and end-points.

Indeed, if the more basic contrast between past and present were my theme, it would be difficult to justify my focus on the reception of the 'myth of the races' rather than on that of the Prometheus-Pandora story, whose presentation in the *Works and Days* ends precisely with an emphasis on the changed circumstances of mankind since Pandora's arrival (*WD* 90–105). Moreover, Prometheus-Pandora should perhaps be considered *the* marker of a Hesiodic composition, since this story features in all three major Hesiodic poems. But even if the reception of this story had not already been treated elsewhere (see [n. 13](#) above) it is, in fact, through contrasting the 'myth of the races' with the preceding account of Prometheus-Pandora in the *Works and Days* that the concerns of this book may be clarified.

The speaker in Hesiod's poem narrates the Prometheus-Pandora story in order to demonstrate why mankind today has to work for a living, emphasizing at the close that 'it is not possible to escape the will of Zeus' (*WD* 105). By contrast, the way in which Hesiod's account of *multi-stage* rupture between idyllic and wretched conditions relates to the argument of the *Works and Days* is, as [chapter 2](#) emphasizes, both more difficult to understand and more interesting as part of an exhortation to Perses and the kings. What scholars of Golden Age traditions miss is that the story is not a free-standing

¹⁶³ See Koning (2010) 165–72 with further bibliography.

construction in Hesiod’s text, but an ‘alternative’ to the story of Prometheus-Pandora; nor does it appear to point a moral independently of the following tale of the hawk and the nightingale. This book emphasizes the scope for interpretation thereby afforded to post-Hesiodic writers, surveying their different reconstructions of the story’s significance in its immediate and wider contexts.

The series of close readings that forms the bulk of this book begins with the passage in the *Works and Days* itself. Key to my understanding of Hesiod’s ancient receptions is the complexity of the environment in which the speaker of this poem situates his races narrative. I then survey modern views of the story’s structure and message for its multiple audiences, highlighting aspects of Hesiod’s presentation that subsequent chapters will show were appropriated or adapted more than once in antiquity. The emphasis is on the plurality of interpretative possibilities opened up by the account in its original context, and on its implications for the speaker’s authority in the poem.

The chapters that follow illuminate different aspects of the ‘Hesiodic’ legacy attached to the metallic races. [Chapter 3](#) demonstrates, through studies of Plato’s *Protagoras*, *Republic* and *Statesman*, that Platonic dialogues review the possibilities of structure, voice and didactic force opened up by the ‘myth of the races’ in its original context, and so press questions about intellectual projects constructed or perceived as ‘Hesiodic’. It is argued that Plato reconstructed the *Works and Days* as a model of a revisionary argument encompassing multiple discursive modes and perspectives, a succession of approaches to and re-presentations of virtue. This model was also a structure with which Plato experimented in bringing out ideas from Hesiod’s poetry as subjects for ‘philosophical’ investigation. The chapter concludes by drawing together suggestions of how Hesiodic pedagogy is transformed in Plato, focusing in particular on the construction of Socrates’ ‘Hesiodic’ voice.

The [fourth chapter](#) is unlike the others in this book, insofar as the large-scale ‘Hesiodism’ of Aratus’ *Phaenomena* is already a point of critical interest in antiquity. My analysis brings new emphasis to the study, however, in arguing that the metallic story in the *Phaenomena* highlights the interpretative challenge offered by

the Hesiodic poems. Nuancing the view that Aratus' *Phaenomena* replaced the *Works and Days* in the minds of Roman writers engaging with the idea of metallic races,¹⁶⁴ I shall rather argue (as does Gee 2013 on other grounds) that Aratus stimulated other poets to reflection on their own terms. To this end, I refer to the Latin translations by Cicero (extant only in fragments), Germanicus (mostly extant) and the late antique poet Avienus¹⁶⁵ (complete). These texts, in which 'Aratean' material may be taken for granted, may be productively used to consider whether, or in what ways, 'Hesiod' is still a relevant 'field of reference' for Latin authors.¹⁶⁶

The remainder of this book develops ideas about the interpretation of Hesiod in Rome, whose legacy has recently begun to receive attention.¹⁶⁷ In the [fifth chapter](#), Ovid's metallic history of humanity in *Metamorphoses* 1 and the two revisions of the idea in the speech attributed to Pythagoras (Book 15) are shown to nuance the didactic image of the 'Roman Hesiod' in Virgil's *Georgics* and to focus rather on the races in the Hesiodic corpus as a model for Ovid's own literary-historical project. My reading emphasizes Ovid's games with narrative pace and perspective, and his experimentation with the ways in which the intervening literary tradition has applied the metallic story to contemporary preoccupations.

My [final chapter](#), countering a scholarly perception that responses to the Hesiodic races end with Ovid, reveals that the dramatic aspects of Hesiodic didaxis are revived with new twists in Roman literature, focusing in particular on the use of the races theme in marked failures of communication. First emphasizing the challenges to the didactic process implicit in Ovid's depiction of Pythagoras, the chapter then focuses on the soliloquy of 'Seneca' and his following interaction with 'Nero' in the pseudo-Senecan historical tragedy *Octavia*. I read this scene as a grim sequel to

¹⁶⁴ The main provocation here is Franchet d'Espèrey (1997) 176, introducing an essay on Astraea in Latin poetry: 'Même si des traits hésiodiques peuvent apparaître chez les poètes latins, il est clair que le mythe qu'ils ont en tête est celui d'Aratos.'

¹⁶⁵ For the alternative spelling Avienius, see Cameron (1995a).

¹⁶⁶ On this term within the study of genre, cf. Conte (1994) 154 n. 2.

¹⁶⁷ See Hardie (2005), Rosati (2009) and Ziogas (2013).

Hesiod's exhortation of Perses in the *Works and Days*. Turning to Juvenal *Satire* 6, I demonstrate that its opening account of the departure of Pudicitia ('Chastity'), mapped onto the tradition of metallic races, foreshadows the poem's dramatic representation of the potential downfall of the didactic speaker. Juvenal, I argue, reiterates an archaic-sympotic construction of Hesiod as misogynistic (and here I do make use of Pandora).

In short, I shall seek to show how the metallic story has the capacity to raise issues greater than its meaning in Hesiod. We might argue this to be true of any famous Hesiodic story, but the 'myth of races' claims a particularly big reach for those 'playing Hesiod' in antiquity. Although the organization of the book is chronological, the discussions aim not to chart a single 'history' or development in reading Hesiod's races in antiquity, but to use the texts in its scope as examples of particular *kinds* of response to Hesiod more broadly. Conversely, my goal in each case is to show how the identification of a 'Hesiodic' voice or idea in reworkings of the races narrative yields a clearer view of the backgrounds, processes and objects of the later texts.

While my core thesis about the continuing relationship between the 'myth of the races' and the didactic mode of its first extant context may well hold for the reception of other Hesiodic stories from the *Works and Days*, my case for the importance of *this* story is that its reception models important issues in the reception of Hesiod. In some senses the tradition of rewriting the races also illustrates the construction of intellectual traditions in Classical antiquity; this point might be expected from a focus on Hesiod, insofar as the tradition of didactic poetry which he 'authorizes' is acknowledged to be intertextually self-conscious.¹⁶⁸ More broadly, didactic modes by their very nature anticipate their reception(s) as a communicative act.¹⁶⁹ Overall, I wish to emphasize the diversity of the intellectual traditions that stem from these readings of Hesiod, as the best possible argument for the significance of Hesiod's races narrative in Classical antiquity and beyond.

¹⁶⁸ Emphasized in Gale (2005); Sluiter (2000) 183 remarks on Classical self-consciousness generally.

¹⁶⁹ As Sistakou (2009) 228 observes.

EMBEDDING THE RACES IN HESIOD

2.1 Introduction

The text at the heart of this book is the narrative of five sequential human races in its first extant context, Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Urging his errant brother Perses and local 'kings' towards work and justice, Hesiod¹ presents his case through 'a bewildering farrago of materials',² from mythological narratives to snippets of practical instruction. In this chapter, I shall emphasize that interpretation of the races sequence (*WD* 106–201), the poem's second extended mythological narrative, leads to and depends upon broader thinking about the argumentative texture of Hesiod's poem. My aim is not primarily to advance new readings, although there are new emphases here. Rather, beginning from modern scholarly lines on this particular narrative in its context, I hope to reveal the opportunities in antiquity for several kinds of commentary on Hesiod's poem.

As a vehicle for exploring 'Hesiodic' dynamics in later ancient literature, the races narrative is one of several popular Hesiodic reference points, such as the proem, the tale of the hawk and the nightingale which follows that of the races, and the later digression on sailing.³ In this chapter, I point out what it is about Hesiod's account of the races that might encourage later writers to 'read' together different passages and aspects of the *Works and Days*; that is, the receptions of these stories cannot and should not be separated absolutely. At the same time, I shall seek to demonstrate that, although marketed within the *Works and Days* as in a strong sense similar to the Prometheus-Pandora story, certain features of the races narrative were soon appropriated towards distinct ends,

¹ On the identification, see the introduction above, n. 10. ² Clay (2009) 71.

³ For reflections on their ancient trajectories, see Hunter (2014).

which in turn prompted their own traditions. It is to be expected that the application of the ‘Hesiodic’ label over time depends less and less precisely on perceived characteristics of Hesiod’s text.

My analysis begins with the point that among modern critics, the relations between Hesiod’s metallic narrative and the material surrounding it in the *Works and Days* were long considered problematic. If close study of Hesiod’s own presentation can suggest why the question of what this story is doing in this text has been asked and answered so often and so variously in the last century of scholarship, we shall at least be prepared for its potential to raise a variety of (similar or different) issues for Hesiod’s ancient readers.

2.2 The *Works and Days*: “‘argument” is perhaps too grand a word”?

Hesiod’s narrative of five human races can be considered one of the catalysts for progress in modern scholarship on the *Works and Days*, whereby juxtapositions in the text provoked critics to reconsider the nature of Hesiod’s project and the backgrounds informing its shape and style.⁴ At a basic level, ‘rethinking’ was (and is) prompted by the very place of the story in the poem. Appearing almost a hundred lines after the prologue in which the speaker undertakes to tell Perses ‘true/genuine things’ (ἐτήτυμα *WD* 10), it follows a tale of how the gods made life difficult for mortals (vv. 42–105: Zeus’s revenge on Prometheus and humankind, enacted through Pandora). The sequence of races is announced as ‘another/alternative account’ (ἕτερο[ς] λόγος[ς] *WD* 106) of ‘how from the same source there have come into being gods and mortal human beings’ (*WD* 108). Indeed, it again contrasts current mortal prospects with their lives in the remote past, taking the same starting-point in humanity ‘far from toil and trouble’.⁵ Chronologically, however, none of the transitions between Silver, Bronze, Heroic and Iron stages is definitively to be reconciled with the advent of

⁴ Kumaniecki (1963), Lamberton (1988).

⁵ Compare νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνων καὶ δίξυος (*WD* 113) with νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κακῶν καὶ ἄτερ χαλεποῦ πόνου (*WD* 91–2), summarizing life before the advent of Pandora.

Pandora, although they may point back to it.⁶ Nor, strictly speaking, can a *discontinuous* series provide an alternative aetiology for current misery, to match Pandora's release of evils into the world.⁷

In consequence, not only the connection between these two sections but also the wider structure and character of the *Works and Days* has come under renewed scrutiny. Martin West has memorably opined that Hesiod during the narrative of the races is carried away by his material.⁸ Viewing Pandora and the races as self-contained 'heavy units' to be woven into a 'skein of argument', West argued that the 'alternative account' of the fall from paradise develops in a different direction after the Golden race: 'The consequence is that by the time [Hesiod] reaches the end [of the narrative] he has quite forgotten his starting-point.'⁹ This view provoked various kinds of scholarly backlash concerning the poem's composition. Devices such as ring composition, polarity and analogy were highlighted as organizational principles¹⁰ in this collection of advice, so often cited piecemeal. Critics had disagreed about the sections into which to divide the poem,¹¹ but critical fashion moved towards emphasis on the patterns of distinctive repetitions which mark not only associations of thought from one section to the next, but bind together discrete parts under overarching themes such as those of giving and hiding.¹² An argument that the poem was not read in sections in antiquity¹³ finds some support in Aratus' response to Hesiod (see [ch. 4](#)). Nevertheless, some incoherence and 'disunity' are admitted even in sympathetic

⁶ See Nelson (1998) ch. 2 n. 42 for bibliography on the stories' compatibility, and West (1978) 166 for hypotheses about what lies behind the later, harmonizing versions which make Deucalion, progenitor of the heroes, the son of Pandora and Prometheus / Epimetheus (as in *Σ WD* 158a, Pertusi (1955) 63).

⁷ So already Teggart (1947) 62; he concludes (71) that it is an 'elaboration' of the Jar story.

⁸ West (1978) 47 with the memorable phrase heading this section.

⁹ West (1978) 49; he shares with Verdenius (1962) and Beye (1972) 24 the assumption that the *Works and Days* is structured by association of ideas.

¹⁰ E.g. Thalmann (1984) 56–62, and see 1–77 in general on the question of 'design' in an 'oral' poem; cf. van Groningen (1958) 283–303. A related debate, although the stakes are different, concerns the authenticity and relevance of the 'Days' section excised by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1928); on its merits see Lardinois (1998).

¹¹ E.g. the nine of Benardete (1967) are different from those of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1928) 132.

¹² E.g. Hamilton (1989) 53–84. ¹³ Beall (2005/6) 168–9.

accounts of the material and the scope of the *Works and Days*.¹⁴ Within antiquity, the two-pronged title seems to be unparalleled,¹⁵ and it takes effort to imagine why the advice in the latter part of the poem was not ordered in more obvious ways.

It is now a standard point in introductions to Hesiodic poetry that answers to questions of detail, and indeed the sophistication of the questions, will depend in large part on how complex a story, let alone a work, we are prepared to attribute to the author-figure ‘Hesiod’.¹⁶ The point was made by Glenn Most in 1997 with reference to the fact that Hesiod’s introduction of the fourth race, that of the heroes, as ‘more just and better’ (δικαιότερον καὶ ἄρειον 158), obstructs a view of the five-stage sequence as a simple expression of progressive decline. The heroes in the *Works and Days* are correlated, if not identified, with those of the Greek epic tradition (dying in Thebes for Oedipus’ flocks, or going to Troy for Helen’s sake, vv. 162–5), while schemes of world history in (usually) four periods, symbolized by metals, have been found in Near Eastern and Mesopotamian literature.¹⁷ The extant works post-date Hesiod, but behind these has been postulated an earlier four-part ‘oriental’ metallic myth of decline into which Hesiod (or a Greek predecessor) intercalated (‘interpolated’, West 1997: 312) the generation celebrated in Greek epic, producing an ‘inadequate’ illustration of the decline principle.¹⁸ It is fair enough to suppose that the idea of metallic labels for periods preceded Hesiod, since ‘if Hesiod himself had produced the metals, he had no motive for denying a metallic identifier to his fourth race of heroes’,¹⁹ but as Most has noted, few scholars respected Hesiod enough to resist the

¹⁴ E.g. Clay (2003) 31–2; summary of critical positions in Ercolani (2010) 44–5; Lamberton (1988) 111 takes v. 106 as ‘feigned indifference’ to the structure of the poem, artfully signalling ‘the provisional quality of this particular performance’. On the problem of ‘coherence’ in the *Works and Days*, see Bezzantakos and Tsagalis (2006) 187–255.

¹⁵ West (1978) 136, although he notes that Ἔργα alone is often used to refer to the whole poem.

¹⁶ Explicit in e.g. Nelson (2005) 331. On the ‘author’ Hesiod, cf. Most (2006) xxii–xxiii, Most (1993).

¹⁷ For a survey, see West (1997) 312–19; he notes that metal-working technologies were most highly developed in the Near East.

¹⁸ History of scholarship in Most (1997). For West (1997) 312, its ‘formalism’, its adherence to a metallic scheme, is ‘entirely alien to the general Greek view of the past’.

¹⁹ Koenen (1994) 25.

temptation to emphasize the foreign provenance of the metallic sequence, by way of ‘explanation’ for its awkward fit within their ideas of the *Works and Days*.²⁰

As it is, however, it is unlikely that a message about universal decline on its own would convince the audiences of the *Works and Days* to work hard and be just. Most therefore argues that Hesiod’s presentation supports a more subtle message about the contemporary conditions for human success (for details see [sect. 2.5](#) below). Bearing in mind the ever-present comparison with Homer for the ancient writers engaging with Hesiod’s races, it is worth noting here the direction in which Most follows up his reassessment of the text. He points out that there is no reason to seek sources external rather than internal to the Greek tradition for a metallic story successfully constructed towards a rhetorical or ethical goal within Hesiod. In conclusion, therefore, he emphasizes that the basic concepts and elements with which Hesiod works are deployed elsewhere within the *Greek* epic tradition; Hesiod could have derived from Homer not just the details other critics observe, of the heroes and of their remote paradise,²¹ but also the idea of the previous generation as superior, and even the choice of these four metals. This last, most provocative idea requires a rather strained combination of arguments,²² but the identification of shared material provides fuel for my more basic point, that the races narrative should be counted one of the passages stimulating in Hesiod’s readers broader reflection on his relation to Homer.

The *main* Hesiodic prompt to think in this direction seems to have been the reference, in the *Works and Days*, to the speaker’s ‘victory with a hymn’ during funeral games at Aulis (ἐνθα μέ φημι ὕμνῳ νικήσαντα φέρειν τρίποδ’ ὠτῶεντα *WD* 656–7). It now seems evident that this passage fuelled ancient narratives of poetic rivalry between Homer and Hesiod, among which the *Contest of Homer*

²⁰ Most (1997) 107: even Vernant’s structuralist exposition of the races as contrasting pairs (Vernant (1960): see further below) sought their origin in Indo-European tripartite social structures.

²¹ See e.g. Teggart (1947) 54–5 on the *Odyssey*.

²² Most (1997) 121–6. He notes that these are the metals most common in Homer, but also points out that they are all valuable in Homer’s world (used e.g. for the Shield of Achilles). Therefore, he still allows a measure of ‘oriental influence’ (126–7) to explain their relative value and order in Hesiod.

and *Hesiod* is the first and most extensive.²³ By contrast, in the more detailed ancient responses to the myth of races, which are my focus, the tendency in the new contexts is towards creative fusions of Hesiod and Homer.

I shall argue too that certain features of Hesiod’s presentation of the races prompted ancient writers to think about the Hesiodic works as a corpus. Such a view of course entails certain ideas about the quality of Hesiodic poetry in general. Most’s 1997 article stands among the earlier contributions to a revolution in the scholarly estimation of Hesiod, in recent years almost always argued to be a poet demanding and provoking interpretation.²⁴ From the vantage-point of such appreciation of Hesiod, claims about the ‘myth of the races’ as a tool through which to illustrate the richness of the wider text will not be surprising, but, by the same token, its selection requires more precise argument. That is, in order for later references to a given passage to function as ‘Leitzitate’ (‘guide-citations’)²⁵ to aspects of the wider text or author, that passage needs both to be ‘marked’ within the work (and/or within the corpus attributed to that author), and also not untypical of it.

Two features of the races’ presentation answer to these criteria; they are rare within Hesiod, yet demonstrably central to both modern and ancient analyses of what distinguishes Hesiod from Homer. One is the re-emergence of the first person ἐγώ at *WD* 174 (‘If only I did not live among the fifth men!’), for the first time since the *Works and Days*’ proem (v. 10: ‘as for me, I’d like to tell truths to Perses’). The tone of moral isolation here, expanded almost a hundred lines later with bitter sarcasm (vv. 270, 272: ‘Right now I would not choose to be just among humans . . . since it is evil for a man to be just if the more unjust one gets greater justice’), has an afterlife of its own within antiquity.²⁶ Modern scholars working on Hesiod only in passing have tended to cite this as evidence of

²³ See first Graziosi (2002) 168–77.

²⁴ For a summary of the trend, see Koning (2010) 35–9. Nisbet (2004) 159 argues that it is time to open up Hesiod’s poetry to the kind of analysis recently granted to poets such as Juvenal and Sappho, now considered ‘intellectually sexy’.

²⁵ Knauer (1964) 145f. tracing allusions to Homer in the *Aeneid* that point to a structural resemblance.

²⁶ See ch. 4 below, n. 109.

Hesiod's 'pessimism'.²⁷ Having in view the races' contribution to Hesiod's ancient legacy, I shall suggest that the speaker's outbursts at his own generation are better situated within a wider consideration of the ebbs and flows of his didactic *grauitas*. I am provoked in part by a modern sketch of Hesiodic didaxis in the *Works and Days* as the product of a *deliberately* unreliable narrator, who makes self-contradictory statements to induce the audience to doubt his didactic authority and to teach itself.²⁸ Without casting in such intentional terms the variety of voices in Hesiod, my third and fourth chapters show how productive was their blend for Plato's and Aratus' differing developments of a more dialogic teaching method, and for Rome's more dramatic experiments in didactic dynamics.

The second focus for my argument about the importance of the races narrative in reflections on 'Hesiodic' poetry as a corpus is this story's billing as 'another' or 'alternative' account of humanity, following that of Prometheus-Pandora. I shall demonstrate that this memorable framing was particularly suggestive for authors writing in the wake of Hesiod, in that it encouraged them to consider in turn the extent to which the *Works and Days* revisits or revises subjects in the *Theogony*. These include the genealogy of strife, the divine succession,²⁹ the creation of Pandora and Hesiod's meeting with the Muses. Hesiod's 'alternative' accounts about the universe, I shall argue, are reconstructed in Plato as a proto-*philosophical* form of re-thinking (ch. 3), in Aratus as a confrontation of myth and science (ch. 4) and in Ovid as an inspiration for the combination of sources in a universal history of the cosmos (ch. 5).

²⁷ E.g. Buzio (1938) 18 on Semonides fr. 1, Havelock (1957) ch. 2 on Plato *Statesman*, Vidal-Naquet (1960) 78 on the 'Hesiodic manner' of Socrates' image of declining constitutions in *Republic* 8, Campion (1994) 211 on how Plato followed 'Hesiod's opinion of human nature' and Voegelin (2000) 51 on 'Hesiodian reality'.

²⁸ Stoddard (2004) 191–2, on Hesiod's promise (*WD* 10) to tell ἐπήτυμα as a function defined by 'absence of the Muses', in contrast to the partnership established in the *Theogony*. Compare Hamilton (1989) 49: 'the parts of this poem are *too* 'disorderly'. He points out that the 'Days' section 'contains three different time-schemes and no obvious order, despite the availability of a simple chronological frame'. These features he takes as encouragement to look further for distinctive repetitions.

²⁹ Most (1997) 127 explicitly compares the succession of human races to the *Theogony*'s divine one.

Methodologically, the *Theogony* has much to answer for in the trajectory of scholarship on the *Works and Days*, if, as has been argued, the 'oriental' aspects of the *Theogony*, evident particularly in the 'King in Heaven Cycle' (i.e. the violent succession myth) shared by the *Theogony* and *Enuma Elish*, was what prompted critics to look to the East for the *Works and Days* as well.³⁰ Be that as it may, the narrative of metallic races in Hesiod, once singled out as 'the one major case of material in the *Works and Days* which must be supposed to have come to Greece from the East',³¹ now plays a variety of roles in the ever-evolving critical debate about how to situate Hesiod, and Greek epic more generally, in the archaic world. For example, they have been cited as evidence for a particular idea of divine justice,³² in support of a more general claim for intercultural exchange behind the *Catalogue* attributed to Hesiod;³³ or again, as evidence that the *Works and Days* places itself within the overall framework of cosmic time, in which the Greek account of the advent of humanity may be seen as rivalling that of Near Eastern epic.³⁴ The significance of this is played down, however, in a more recent survey of possible backgrounds to Hesiodic poetry, which makes more of the didactic frame of the *Works and Days* against traditions of 'wisdom literature'.³⁵ All these have provoked more careful attention to the range of possibilities in the terms 'parallel', 'borrowing', 'Eastern', and 'Classical' itself.³⁶

Whether this chapter's basic question about the 'fit' between the narrative of the races and the rest of the *Works and Days* is phrased with an eye to later developments in philosophy, universal history or satire, the proposition to be argued is that, far from being mindlessly repeated as a trope, Hesiod's narrative functioned as a

³⁰ See e.g. Walcott (1966) chs. 1–2, Nicolai (1964) 189–94.

³¹ West (1978) 28: 'if we did not know that it came from Greece' [i.e. from Hesiod], we would place it 'somewhere near the ancient Near East' on the basis of resemblances to other 'works of wisdom'.

³² Dihle and Feldmeier (2009). ³³ Koenen (1994).

³⁴ Haubold (2002) argues that 'created' men are a feature of the Akkadian tradition, and views the creation of the woman Pandora in Hesiod as a polemical response to this.

³⁵ Rutherford (2009).

³⁶ See Burgess (2001) on the monumental survey of West (1997); Haubold (2002); Rutherford (2009).

‘creative stimulus’³⁷ to reflect on the ‘didactic’ dynamic and the construction of intellectual traditions which combine worlds of different texts.

My closer analysis begins by summarizing responses to the mixture of material in the *Works and Days* regarding the nature of the argument, focusing in turn on the environment, audience, discursive mode and message outlined by Hesiod’s poem.³⁸ Each of these are significant for ancient readings of Hesiod’s narrative of the races, and so for this book. Short discussions of the proem, the genealogy of Strife, the Pandora story and the ‘Days’ section will introduce the complexity of Hesiod’s ‘world’ (2.2a). Under ‘audience’ (2.2b), I take account of Perses and the kings, and more broadly the text’s subdivisions of its audience into those who know and those who do not. In catering for different levels of understanding, the blend of myth and aphorism in the *Works and Days* is worth noting. The Hesiodic speaker continually reframes his riddles (2.2c), in particular the αἶνος of the hawk and nightingale. With all these in view, I address the meaning of the races narrative in its textual context (2.2d). After that, I tackle the framing, structures and emphases in the races (sections 2.3–2.6), coming back to the question of their place in the poem as a whole with some reflections on the complexities within Hesiod’s voice (2.7). For our impression of Hesiod’s didactic project and of his authority, in particular, I shall aim to show how the interpretation of the races affects that of the whole *Works and Days*.

2.2a *Difficult for mortal men to know*

At the end of the proem to the *Works and Days*, the speaker announces his intention to communicate to Perses the ‘realities’ (ἐτήτυμα *WD* 10) of the environment in which his exhortation towards work and justice will operate. In a sense, the opening verses of the poem have already given the main key to Hesiod’s perspective: our prosperity is dependent on the will of Zeus.

³⁷ Hunter (2014) 32.

³⁸ Compare the four aspects of Jakobson’s model of linguistic communication – context, contact, code and message – illustrated by Schmitz (2007) 21–3 with reference to Virgil’s *Georgics*.

Having invoked the Muses to hymn their father,³⁹ the proem emphasizes the ease with which Zeus can alter mortal circumstances for better or worse (ῥέα or ῥεῖα four times in vv. 5–7). This point is reiterated in various ways throughout the poem, along with the other major lesson to be absorbed about human experience: it turns out that *only* Zeus can ‘easily’ deal with everything as he wills; for the rest of us, the mind of Zeus is ‘different at different times, difficult for mortal men to understand’ (ἄλλοτε δ’ ἄλλοις Ζηνὸς νόος αἰγίοχοιο, / ἀργαλέος δ’ ἄνδρεσσι καταθνητοῖσι νοῆσαι 483–4).⁴⁰

The variegated texture of the *Works and Days* offers in miniature the sense of a world governed by Zeus’s omnipotence, his ideas made explicit and implicit as he chooses. Attempts to pin down the social, economic and physical landscape of the authorial persona of the *Works and Days*⁴¹ coexist with scholarly emphases that the object of Hesiod’s didaxis is metaphysical more than practical – not farming so much as how it *feels* to farm.⁴² The poem seeks to convey humanity’s place in the cosmos as much through myths as through a ‘Farmers’ calendar’, ethical precepts and practical advice.

For example, the prominently placed narrative of human punishment, in the form of the creation of Pandora and her opening of a jar, develops both explicitly and obliquely Hesiod’s presentation of Zeus as invincible and impenetrable. Directly following an assertion that apparently prosperous kings fail to understand the key to profit (νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν . . . θνειαρ 40–1), the story begins from the observation that sustaining ourselves is not in fact easy ‘because the gods keep the means of life concealed from human beings’ (κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν 42). At this point the speaker alludes to Prometheus’ challenge to Zeus’s rule,

³⁹ As West (1978) 136 on *WD* 1–2 notes, this is a deliberate choice: Hesiod could have replicated a hymn to the Muses, as in the *Theogony*, but he is creating a specific world for the *Works and Days*.

⁴⁰ On the power of Zeus, see Nelson (2005) 337–40.

⁴¹ For this approach, see Detienne (1963) 19–27, Edwards (2004).

⁴² Nelson (1996) and Nelson (1998), in whose titles, ‘Drama’ and *Metaphysics of Farming* say it all. Cf. too the patchy coverage of the instructions: Benardete (1967) 170 notes that since nine days of the month remain fateless in the ‘Days’, it seems man lacks knowledge of almost one-third of the year.

here presented as a rapid exchange of acts of concealing fire (47–52).⁴³ Through the description of Pandora, whose fine exterior (καλὸν εἶδος 63) masks the ‘mind of a bitch and thievish character’ (κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπικλοπὸν ἦθος 67), the speaker reiterates the importance of what is hidden.⁴⁴ Following Epimetheus’ misguided acceptance of Zeus’s ‘gift’ of this woman, the story pans back out to the current state of humanity, now presented as a telling example of Zeus’s power over mortal fortunes: ‘for before [Pandora opened the jar] the tribes of humans lived on the earth apart from evils and difficult toil . . . [but she released evils from the jar] by the plans of Zeus’ (βουλῇσι Διὸς 99). The conclusion – ‘thus it is not possible in any way to evade the mind of Zeus’ (105) – implies that Zeus’s supremacy derives from his ability to operate through such layers of agency.

As a literal and metaphorical ‘figure’ for Zeus’s deceptive power, Pandora is one of the poem’s early prompts to realize that things are not always as they appear.⁴⁵ In fact, it is unclear how far ‘Hesiod’ really expects anyone fully to understand the world that the poem describes. Immediately following the proem, the whole argument begins from the idea that the human world is *more* complex to negotiate than expected. The speaker corrects the notion of a single birth of ἔρις (Strife) (ἀρα *WD* 11: ‘so then’, ‘as it turns out’), emphasizing instead that Strife can prompt both blame and praise, both time-wasting and good work.⁴⁶ The dual portrait of Strife outlines the ‘sociological perspective’ of the *Works and Days*.⁴⁷ It sets in train a series of concepts with more

⁴³ This presupposes knowledge of the Prometheus narrative of the *Theogony*, as Slatkin (2004) 32 notes.

⁴⁴ Vernant (1981) is the classic structuralist treatment of this theme in the two main Prometheus stories.

⁴⁵ Kanaan (2008) reads Pandora as a symbol of the deceptive exterior of the text *per se* – cf. Pucci (1977) ch. 4 on Pandora as the ultimate mimesis / supplement to reality, hence a figure for language.

⁴⁶ Denniston (1954) 35–7: ‘surprise attendant upon disillusionment’ – but see the modifications in Zarecki (2007) 11–13. It is a ‘correction’, whether that refers back to the genealogy offered in his own *Theogony* (225) (so Most (1993) 77, Nagler (1992) 87 and many others), or modifies the negative image of Strife that his audience would have gleaned from early Greek *epos* more broadly (so Rousseau (1996)). On the programmatic ambiguity of Strife in particular, see Gagarin (1990).

⁴⁷ Rosenmeyer (1957) 262. Hamilton (1989) 54 finds an emphasis on bad strife in the first half of the poem, and good strife in the second.

than one aspect: δίκη and αἰδώς, for instance, are similarly exposed as ambivalent or multi-layered (αἰδώς at 317–20, δίκη progressively amplified especially from 213–85).⁴⁸ Work itself is both an unpleasant imposition and the best chance of prosperity (an idea crucial in receptions of the poem, such as Virgil’s *Georgics*). Trickiest of all is φήμη, ‘Rumour’, whose divine power is asserted near the end of the poem (761–4) in terms of the dual power to make men famous or not – a point reminiscent of Zeus himself in the poem.

The fact that ἔλπις is retained inside the jar is no guarantee of good either. It used to be assumed that Pandora released *into the world* most of what was inside the jar (since ‘evils’ fill the seas and lands in consequence), so if seen as unequivocally good – ‘Hope’ – its retention in the jar yet evident existence among mankind makes no sense. One solution is that what was in the jar should rather be considered ‘defences against evils’, or apotropaic demons, most of which are now lost to us⁴⁹ – compare the transformation of mankind in the narrative of races, in which, when the goddesses leave the earth, humanity is left (201) without an ἀλκή – ‘defence’. ἔλπις alone is not necessarily effective; later on in the *Works and Days*, ἔλπις is ‘empty’ for the lazy man and ‘not good for a needy man’ (498–500).⁵⁰ What is in Pandora’s jar, then, is perhaps better understood more neutrally as ‘Anticipation’.⁵¹

As ‘Hesiod’ presents it, the fortunes associated with institutions and activities, too, depend on one’s circumstances. Marriage itself can be the best or the worst luck for a man, depending on the kind of wife one gets (702–5) – I shall argue in [chapter 6](#) that Hesiod’s impression of two potential extremes in women lies behind a double caricature of Hesiodic women in Juvenal’s satiric revision of the metallic races myth. In the world of the *Works and Days*,

⁴⁸ Cf. McKay (1963) on αἰδώς, Claus (1977) and Dickie (1978) on δίκη. Blusch (1970) 41–79 comments on these words as prime examples of Hesiod’s use of abstract words and antithetical style.

⁴⁹ Beall (1989); cf. Von Fritz (1947).

⁵⁰ Along with Hesiod’s tale of Pandora, these lines probably stimulated the later tradition that Prometheus gave ‘blind hopes’ to men, as a kind of consolation for their existence (*Prometheus Bound* 248–51) and/or as a replacement for foresight of their deaths (*Gorgias* 523d5).

⁵¹ So trans. Most (2006) 95 n. 7; *LfrgE* s.v. ἔλπις points to the wide range of ἔλπομαι.

nothing is stated to be good or bad once and for all (it turns out that even sailing has more than one season for it, 678). Additionally there is the possibility of irony in Hesiod's own switches of perspective⁵² – the first two-thirds of the poem are concerned with our best chances of securing a livelihood (βίος), but Hesiod then refuses to praise risky sailing enterprises 'for property is life for wretched mortals' (χρήματα γὰρ ψυχὴ πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν 686), i.e. they confuse life with livelihood. That is to say, Hesiod's presentation will not leave his audiences complacent that they know what constitutes success, let alone knowing their chances of making it through.

We should also bear in mind how the speaker's goals and attitudes in this poem gain point in relation to the *Theogony*. The attitude to kings in the *Works and Days*, for example, is markedly different from that in the *Theogony* proem, in which they are 'divine'.⁵³ Instead, the epithet 'divine' is tied to the way someone urinates (ἐξόμενος δ' ὃ γε θεῖος ἀνὴρ, πεπνυμένα εἰδώς 731: 'it is crouching that the god-fearing man, who knows wisdom, does it').⁵⁴ Kings are now 'bribe-eaters' and the farmer is made central – the calendar of his year's work takes up 300 lines, including the appendices on seasons for sailing. The idea that 'Hesiod' as a thinker should be seen as consciously revising his own ontology or epistemology, whether from the *Theogony*, or in the course of the present poem, is gaining ground among modern scholars. For my purposes, what matters is the potential of the text to be taken this way.⁵⁵ The basic idea that the world of the *Works and Days* is consciously complex cannot be doubted – a detached scorn for the foolish emerges more than once⁵⁶ and the instructions at the end of the poem are couched as privileged information (παῦροι . . . ἴσασι 814, 820). This, however, raises the question of the speaker's own relation to his audiences.

⁵² Hunt (1981) takes an extreme view on Hesiod's apparent advantage.

⁵³ See e.g. Clay (2007) 448, 453.

⁵⁴ For a serious assessment of the role of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ in the latter part of the poem and in relation to the race of heroes, see Currie (2007).

⁵⁵ Peabody (1975) 257 treats the *Works and Days*' cumulative semantics as a feature of oral poetry.

⁵⁶ Cf. νήπιος, οὐδε ἴσασιν . . . (40–1) and νήπιος, οὐδε τὸ οἶδ' (456, on the deluded man who little knows the work involved in building a plough).

2.2b *Approaching multiple audiences*

The ostensible motivation for the *Works and Days* is a dispute (sketched at *WD* 27–41) with the speaker’s brother Perses;⁵⁷ Perses has at some stage tried to take more than his fair share of the inheritance, ‘greatly honouring the kings, those gift-eaters, who want to pass this judgement’ (38–9). The phrasing leaves the nature and progress of the quarrel open to reconstruction in many different ways, but the upshot is that Perses is at a crossroads (as his options are vividly depicted at 286–92); therefore, the poem addresses the big issue of how one should live.⁵⁸

In the first instance, then, the most persuasive readings of the races should be those which show how this story forms part of the larger address to Perses. The narrative is initially addressed to a singular ‘you’ (σὺ . . . ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν, ‘you lay it up in your spirit’, 107) but its application is not thereby *restricted* to Perses. The poem is also directed at several other audiences: the local ‘kings’ or ‘lords’, the general audience of the poem and Zeus.⁵⁹ Critics envisaging the *Works and Days* as a dramatic monologue have pictured its audience as judges in the *agora* and as the crowd at the lawcourt;⁶⁰ the second of these, at least, is not incompatible with their configuration in the ‘calendar’ section as Boeotian farmers.

What is explicit is that the opposition of justice and ‘outrageousness’ (ὕβρις), which emerges out of the narrative of races, is afterwards expanded as much for the attention of the kings as of Perses, for whom the preceding story of Prometheus/Pandora explained the need to work (and pointedly portrayed a wise and a foolish brother).⁶¹ In fact, a central feature of the argumentation in the first part of the poem is the speaker’s alternation between Perses and the kings; the complex progress of this argument for justice is largely

⁵⁷ Lamberton (1988) 106 on the specific situation against the backdrop of traditional advice.

⁵⁸ So Clay (2003) 34–6, arguing, with Green (1984) 31 and Blümer (2001) 16 against Gagarin (1974) that there was no prior litigation involving Hesiod. On Clay’s view, it is Hesiod’s refusal to bail out a destitute Perses that has triggered the dispute.

⁵⁹ See first Griffith (1983). ⁶⁰ Respectively, Jensen (1966) and Green (1984).

⁶¹ Interpreting the greater focus on Epimetheus in the *Works and Days* by comparison with the version in the *Theogony* in the light of the relations between the brothers Hesiod and Perses, cf. Jensen (1966) 15–16, Walcot (1966) 62, 81.

because of the fact that it must persuade each audience that their self-interest lies in the joint practice of justice. So in turn, having announced a tale ‘for kings’ (νῦν δ’ αἶνον βασιλεῦσιν ἐρέω 202), Hesiod, ‘while adopting the voice of Justice, . . . speaks *about* the kings but his harangue is directed at Perses’,⁶² whose attention is called at 213 to the opposition of concepts (Ἦ Πέρση, σὺ δ’ ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ’ ὕβριν ὀφελλε: ‘As for you, Perses, heed justice and do not foster outrageousness’). Before the speaker addresses the kings directly again with warnings of divine punishment (248, 263), the portraits of the Just and Unjust cities mention kings’ responsibilities within communities (225–7, 240–1); he then re-engages Perses by name at 274–5, 286 and 298–9.

Perses himself has a dual aspect, oscillating between the apostrophes μέγα νήπιε (‘great fool’, 286, 633, and νήπιε 397) and δῖον γένος (‘divine offspring’, 299). It has been argued that these epithets are to be taken as signposts of the course of the ‘education of Perses’, in the sense that they track the fluctuating tone of the speaker’s interaction with his primary audience, stern or encouraging, through the sermons on justice and work.⁶³ The narrative of races is not explicitly directed in this way, but its role in the larger discourse on justice is critical: as I shall emphasize later in this chapter, only after the sequential sketches of five races does the speaker have in view a clear ethical choice to urge upon Perses and the kings, arguing as it were *ad hominem* for both positive and negative potential within his addressees. Even with only Perses in mind, the sequence of races is plausibly considered both ‘protreptic’ (as Proclus termed the opening emphasis on kinship with the gods in 108)⁶⁴ and apotreptic, insofar as its emphasis on the misery in store for the Iron race responds to the present threat of hubristic behaviour from Perses about the inheritance.

Indeed, the *Works and Days* refers to mortals in general with a mix of epithets similar to those for Perses – they are both ‘death-

⁶² For this emphasis, see Clay (1993) 28, reprised and developed in Clay (2003) 38–42 (cited at 41).

⁶³ Clay (1993), refining West (1978) 36–40 on the changing construction of Perses in the poem.

⁶⁴ Σ *WD* 106–8 in Pertusi (1955) 48: προτρεπτικῶς μὲν εἴρηται εἰς ἀρετήν, adding: ‘for, since we are not by nature evil, our condition is due to slackening’ (ὕφεσις).

nurtured’ (κηριτρεφέων 418) and ‘blessed’ (μακάρων 549). Humans are more than animals but less than gods, as the kings are pointedly reminded in reference to the all-seeing eye of Zeus, and all are subject to nature (557–8 emphasizes the power of the rain to drench clothes and skin). Insofar as Perses is a sort of Everyman, should we conclude anything from the fact that he disappears from the poem near the end? Apostrophes in 397 and 611 draw Perses’ attention to the intervening calendar of the year’s tasks, perhaps because we have just been reminded that he has come begging (396); the speaker recalls him to attention at 633 and 641 because of a story about the father they share;⁶⁵ thereafter, Perses is addressed no more. One modern interpretation takes this as Hesiod’s signal that, beyond the ‘ethical’ lesson of a connection between justice and prosperity, there is a subtext of ambiguity and arbitrariness reserved for the external audience: work will not necessarily pay off.⁶⁶ In some ways, this is a very Platonic take on the role of the characters in Hesiod’s ‘dialogue’ as stimulants to reflection. The variety of addressees in the modern canon of didactic poetry may tell us something about what ancient readers made of Perses,⁶⁷ but there is more to be said.

In fact, *all* the specific human addressees of the *Works and Days* are both disparaged and praised for their knowledge; ‘kings’ too are characterized as νήπιοι (40), although described as a ‘knowing’ audience for the ‘coded tale’ of the αἴνος (φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς 202).⁶⁸ The complex progress of the argument, then, stems not only from the switch between audiences but also from the speaker’s concern to cater for a range of levels of attention more broadly, and sometimes the two kinds of shift coincide. For example, the αἴνος of the violent hawk is directed to self-consciously elite listeners, but the speaker later returns to the behaviour of birds, and here it is

⁶⁵ Commenting on *WD* 633, Proclus suggested that the apostrophe ‘rouses Perses to rivalry of his father’ (*ibid.* 201).

⁶⁶ Clay (1993). ⁶⁷ See the essays in Schiesaro *et al.* (1993).

⁶⁸ Mordine (2006) 365 argues for two kinds of kings in the *Works and Days*, as a doubling of their identity from the *Theogony*, parallel to that of Eris. They may equally be understood, however, as two facets of the same addressee, like Perses. The image of ‘gift-eating’ men dragging justice immediately after the story of the hawk’s speech addressed to ‘kings who know’ points to the identity of the bribe-eating magistrates and the audience of the coded tale.

Perses he reminds to apply what he has heard and choose justice over violence (see 2.2c below); these lines seem to introduce a concession to the other, less intelligent addressee.⁶⁹ The audience constructed by the *Works and Days* is always split to various degrees between ‘fools’ and ‘those who know’. As the speaker begins to refocus his discourse towards work, he outlines a spectrum of relationships to knowledge, a pointed one in the context of the address to Perses. ‘Best of all’ (πανάριστος 293) is the one who does not need instruction – ‘he who thinks for himself, considering what will be better, later and in the end’ (293–4: a figure identified most often as Hesiod (recalling Prometheus), but also as his mirror, the ideal listener).⁷⁰ A man who obeys a good advisor is ἐσθλός (‘fine’, 295), whereas he who neither listens nor thinks for himself is ἀχρήσιος (‘useless’, 297).

The dynamics of the ‘split’ audience in Greek and Roman didactic poetry following Hesiod have received some attention.⁷¹ Different degrees of responsiveness in listeners will be shown to have a central importance, however, in Aratus’ recasting of the races narrative around the speech of the Maiden Justice (examined in ch. 4). Plato in particular, I shall argue (ch. 3), responded to the way in which the other audiences addressed alongside Perses – first the kings, and then the general audience – attract different kinds of admonition at different points.⁷² Ovid, ps.Seneca and Juvenal too will be shown to reflect on the status of the primary addressee of such a monologue (chs. 5 and 6). It is therefore worth here dwelling a little further on the discursive modes in the texture of Hesiod’s argumentation.

2.2c Argumentative density

The potential in Hesiod’s narratives for different levels of understanding deserves wider emphasis as a facet of the argument in the

⁶⁹ Similarly Hunter (2014) 243. Cf. Nagy (1990a) 148: an αἶνος is predicated both on an ‘ideal’ audience and context *and* on the reality of uncertainties in interaction between performer and audience in an actual performance context.

⁷⁰ Hesiod: Koning (2010) 162. Listener: Clay (1993) 32–3, building on Gagarin (1990) 177–8.

⁷¹ Didactic can mobilize up to four ‘narrative functions’: authority, teacher, disciple and wider audience. Cf. e.g. Mitsis (1993) and Obbink (1993).

⁷² Study of this forms a large part of the project of Schmidt (1986).

Works and Days. Even before addressing Perses, the speaker indicates that his argument will not be straightforward. In the proem, the expression ἐτήτυμα μυθησάμεν (10) is not just a polite optative ‘I should like to relate true things’: it ‘goes beyond a bare account; it implies a rhetoric and an argument that, even as it seeks to persuade, simultaneously reveals and hides the “things as they are”’.⁷³ To illustrate this process in action, I shall focus on the most prominent example in the *Works and Days* of a complex discursive mode – the αἶνος (‘coded tale’) of the hawk and the nightingale, whose point in its argumentative context, like that of the narrative of races, has been the subject of intense scholarly debate. It is worth recalling the ancient reception of Hesiod as a riddling poet, as testified in the extant *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*: in this work, it is Hesiod rather than Homer who sets the questions and the ‘sentences of doubtful meaning’ (ἀμφίβολους γνῶμας §9 West) which require completion by Homer.

Immediately following the prediction that our Iron race will be abandoned to evils, the αἶνος, at least the part explicitly directed towards ‘kings who themselves have understanding’ (φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς 202), opens *in mediis rebus* and literally in mid-air. All we (over)hear is the scornful speech of a hawk to a nightingale it holds in its talons: ‘You are going wherever I shall carry you, even if you are a singer ... stupid is he who would wish to contend against the stronger’ (208, 210). The hawk’s point is all too clear: ‘might makes right’, which is where the speaker predicted the Iron race would end up; indeed, the nightingale in the hawk’s talons graphically illustrates δίκη ... ἐν χερσὶ (‘justice ... is in their hands’) from within that account (192).⁷⁴

The hawk’s reference to the nightingale as a singer (ᾄδοός) encourages the obvious conclusion, which goes back at least to Proclus, that the hawk and the nightingale are intended as figures for the rapacious kings and the mistreated speaker-singer himself.⁷⁵ Such a reading is supported by the following paragraph, addressed

⁷³ Clay (2003) 32; compare Stoddard (2004) 60–97 on views of the Muses’ declaration of ability to relate ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα (‘things like the truth’ *Th.* 27).

⁷⁴ So van Dijk (1997) 131, citing Aesop’s fable of the hawk who calls the nightingale food ἐν χερσὶ.

⁷⁵ Σ *WD* 207–12 in Pertusi (1955) 76.

to Perses, in which Hesiod speaks of the clamour when justice is dragged ‘where gift-eating men carry her off’ (ἧ κ’ ἀνδρες ἄγωσι / δωροφάγοι 220–1, recalling the hawk’s threat ‘[you’ll go] wherever I shall take you’ ἧ σ’ ἂν ἐγὼ . . . ἄγω). In so supplementing the image of a screaming nightingale with a verbal recollection of the ‘gift-eaters who want to pass this judgement’ (39), the speaker implicitly confirms the picture within the αἶνος as another image of the violent treatment of δίκη he himself is experiencing among the men of Iron (174ff: ‘If only then I did not have to live among the fifth men. . .’).

Scholars with an eye to the overall argument of the *Works and Days*, however, balked at the idea that this bird-story functions simply to give the ‘kings’ a voice, rather than contributing positively to the speaker’s ethical exhortation, stated outright in the next line (213): ‘As for you, Perses, give heed to (ἄκουε) Justice and do not foster Outrageousness.’ The verb ἄκουε in this context seems pointedly to urge ignoring the words of the hawk. Several modern scholars of Hesiod followed this up by pointing to 274–80 as a ‘second reading’ of 202–12, if not a delayed ‘denial’ that its image of interaction is applicable to mankind.⁷⁶ *WD* 274–5 remind Perses to heed justice, in terms very similar to 213, but also now to ‘forget violence entirely’ (βίης δ’ ἐπιλήθεο πάμπαν 275) before explicitly distinguishing the behaviour of animals and birds, which do not possess δίκη, from the law that Zeus has granted us: ‘for to humans he gave justice, which is far better’ (279–80).

In fact, those seeking a more positive interpretation of the αἶνος do not need to look so far ahead. The paragraphs immediately following the story for kings offer an image like that of the fable, but with a satisfactory sting in the tail. The noise given out by Justice as she is dragged away (τῆς . . . Δίκης ῥόθος ἐλκομένης 220) perhaps recalls the squealing nightingale, but now in the context of ultimate victory – invisible revenge (222–4) – amplified by the image of Just and Unjust cities and invisible watchers (249–55), and again by the assertion that Zeus is watching kings, informed by Justice (256–62).⁷⁷ Looking back on the fable in this frame within

⁷⁶ E.g. Hunt (1981) 36, Green (1984) 35ff., Hamilton (1989) 64, Sihvola (1989) 50.

⁷⁷ Solmsen (1949) 86 finds this passage a ‘sequel’ to the αἶνος.

the address to Perses puts the elite addressees of the αἶνος ultimately in the position of the nightingale⁷⁸ and the hawk in the position of Zeus. Still other readings use the immediate argumentative context in other ways to draw attention to a shift within the αἶνος, whether of audience, level or focus in the portrait of ὕβρις.⁷⁹

This section of the poem is a prime example of the argumentative density that results from the bare juxtaposition of images, or rather their supplementation with other images rather than explanations, which produces a continual reframing of meaning. Certainly, since no motivation is given for relating the fable, it is not clear that 212 marks its conclusion. Contrast the story of Prometheus and Pandora: it is clearly motivated to explain the present necessity of working for a living as a result of divine concealment of the means of life (cf. γάρ 42) and its concluding οὕτως clause (105 on our inability to evade the will of Zeus) returns to the opening emphasis on divine power over human affairs. The races narrative is somewhere in between; it has a stated goal or subject (the original but no longer extant commonality of gods and human beings 108), but the story itself seems to go well beyond this (see [sect. 2.3](#) below). What we can say for certain is that, at 213, Perses emerges for the first time since before the ‘myth of the races’, as the speaker launches into his exhortation to justice, and the later injunction to Perses at 274–5 (‘Perses, lay these things in your heart and give heed to Justice, and forget violence entirely’) recalls both 107 and 213, so pulling together the myth and the αἶνος as material for the argument.

Studies of such thematic repetition in Hesiod provide further evidence of ways in which passages and ideas ‘bleed into each other’ in Hesiod’s poem.⁸⁰ I emphasize the point here because, as

⁷⁸ See e.g. Jensen (1966) 21, van Dijk (1997) 134 with n. 86 and Nelson (1997).

⁷⁹ For example, the image of the foolish nightingale may be related in several ways to the presumptuous Perses mistakenly setting himself up with kings (pl.), unaware that he will be dumped, and likewise for the kings themselves – so Hubbard (1995) 163–7. This reading has been criticized for its idea that Perses too was a poet, but the basic point about the potential for multiple reference points in an animal story seems fair – cf. e.g. the famous lion cub story in Aesch. *Agamemnon* 717–36, with Knox (1952).

⁸⁰ See first Thalmann (1984). Hence observations of large-scale architecture are possible; for example, the units of people and of time on which Hesiod focuses contract as the poem goes on: from race to city to individual to parts of the body, and from generations to one year, to one month, to parts of the day. On such structures see Hamilton (1989) 78–84 and Lardinois (1998) 323 with bibliographical review.

later chapters will demonstrate, the interaction between sections is a point of experiment in ancient readers of Hesiod such as Plato, Aratus and Ovid. One can read the αἶνος backwards as well as forwards, concluding a triad which shifts the focus between gods, humans and beasts; the three mythological stories set up a whole series of provocative questions in the poem about the difference between humans and animals.⁸¹ Such questions resonate in texts such as Plato's *Statesman* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, let alone the stories about human and animal communication in the fable tradition itself.

It is still open to speculation quite what kind of difference in tone or intent is heralded with the announcement of the αἶνος (as opposed to the λόγος),⁸² hence where or how to look for the message. The question of how much supplementation is required for different parts of Hesiod's discourse is implicitly addressed in Hesiod's receptions. It seems wisest, in any case, to consider this discursive mode in the context of contemporary/earlier material rather than in the light of the Greek 'fable' traditions. αἶνος in Homeric epic seems to range between (straightforward) 'praise' (e.g. *Il.* 23.795) and a 'tale' with significance or an ulterior message for the hearer (e.g. *Il.* 23.652, *Od.* 14.508–9).⁸³ One attempt at synthesis proposes a connection between edifying speech and gift or reward;⁸⁴ another puts weight on the 'coded' aspect of αἶνος, connecting the discourse of praise only with 'those who [really do] understand'.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Hesiod's kennings (e.g. 605: 'day-sleeper') challenge the audience to distinguish between men and animals, as does the shifting perspective – e.g. 533 relegates mortals into a simile for 'forest-dwellers'.

⁸² Sistakou (2009) 230 terms them both 'moral allegories'; Hunter (2014) 27–8 n. 68 suggests that λόγος marks its content as novel, whereas αἶνος marks an abbreviation of familiar material. I find both novelty and abbreviation in the races story; see pp. 78–9 below, with nn. 139–42.

⁸³ See *LfgE* s.v. αἶνος and λόγος. The verb αἰνέω becomes in Greek the principal means of signifying an utterance with a second meaning, but αἶνος is not exactly αἰνίσμα.

⁸⁴ Pucci (1977) 61 and 76, noting that Eumaeus characterizes Odysseus' tale as one that will not 'miss a reward'. He therefore wants the Hesiodic passage to be addressed to kings, 'wise men that they are', but recognizes the potential for an address to (bribe-eating?) kings, 'wise though they be'.

⁸⁵ Nagy (1979) 237–41, citing Pindar *Ol.* 2.83, *P.* 5.107 and Bacch. 3.85, together with the fact that Pindar applies the derivative παραινέω to 'the didactic function of the Hesiodic tradition in general' at *I.* 6.66–70. Nagy (1990a) 148–50 notes that by contrast, Greek epic does not present itself as αἶνος, but the importance of this is downplayed by Pratt (1993) 97 n. 1.

Certainly φρονέουσιν καὶ αὐτοῖς at *WD* 202 suggests that the relationship between the αἶνος and the argument of the poem is not self-evident, but requires interpretation from the kings.⁸⁶ This aspect surfaces in one scholarly claim that the hawk’s description recalls divinities or omens in Homer⁸⁷ (in this connection we may also think of the final line of the *Works and Days* – see pp. 85–6 below) and again in a citation of a possible Near-Eastern reference point for the fable the kings were *expecting*, arguing that this is overturned by Hesiod.⁸⁸ Such continuing debate about Hesiod’s argumentative density is revealing; I shall demonstrate in this book that the interaction between discursive modes, story and ‘moral’ within Hesiod’s poem⁸⁹ is a point of conscious experiment in texts from Plato’s *Protagoras* to Aratus’ *Phaenomena* at least.

2.2d Human capacity and responsibility

If the importance of the races narrative in the poem, and hence in its receptions, depends on the passages or even poems it is read *with*, we should also consider Hesiod’s ultimate argumentative goals in the *Works and Days*. The speaker urges both work and justice,⁹⁰ each both directly (e.g. 299–316, 382 for work, 213, 268, 274–5 for justice) and indirectly through mythological narratives. The themes are interleaved such that these goals cannot clearly be separated; the introduction to the story of Prometheus-Pandora, for example, is apparently motivated as a demonstration to Perses of the need to work for a living (27–9, 42–7), but ends up lamenting the presence of evils in the world more broadly. The ‘myth of the races’ is usually thought to contribute more to the theme of justice,⁹¹ but to be truly embedded in the poem, it ought to develop both goals.

⁸⁶ For strong emphasis on this point, cf. Green (1984) 38, Heath (1985) 249, Pratt (1993) 96, Beall (2005/6) 173. Cf. *OF* 1a Bernabé and Pindar *Olympian* 2.85 addressing initiates.

⁸⁷ Lonsdale (1989) reading the fable as an omen; overall his idea convinced few, but it is at least striking that direct speech has not appeared in the *Works and Days* since Zeus’s threat to Prometheus. See also Nelson (1997) and (differently) Steiner (2007) 178–88 on the hawk’s Homeric echoes.

⁸⁸ Zanker (2009).

⁸⁹ See Nelson (2005) on the ‘cragginess’ of jamming together fable and myth in Hesiod.

⁹⁰ On these parallel ‘isotopies’ of the poem, see Calame (2004).

⁹¹ One exception is Fontenrose (1974), who reads between the lines to argue that mortal failure to work is the hidden reason for the demise of all prior races.

One interpretation of the races stands out on this front: that of Glenn Most. His structuralist interpretation, outlined more fully in [section 2.5](#) below, finds in Hesiod's sequence of five races a blend of two overlapping patterns of contrasts and blurred boundaries between different races. One pattern fuses the final three races in opposition to Gold and Silver, the other blends only the Heroic and Iron races, such that the audience emerges meditating both on human capacity and on human chances for success by comparison with the earlier races in the sequence.⁹² One strong advantage of this reading is that it acknowledges, rather than suppresses, the complexity both of the narrative of the races and of the argumentative programme of the *Works and Days*, which urges both justice and work, with attendant questions about our capacity and inclination towards each goal.

Given the wider contexts of complexity in the *Works and Days*, of environment, audience, discursive mode and message, it will not be out of place to find a plurality of ways in which the account of the races could resonate with its audiences. I now begin to consider the 'meaning' of the narrative in Hesiod by looking to its impact in the wider context of the first long movement of the poem (2.3) before turning to the help (or otherwise) given by the lines immediately framing the story (2.4).

2.3 The importance of the 'myth of the races'

In response to the older view that the sequence of metals and heroes presents an idea of progressive decline, the discontinuity of the races provoked in the twentieth century a wave of commentary suggesting that their order was of secondary importance.⁹³ Most famous is Jean-Pierre Vernant's structural analysis based on the tripartite view of social functions presented by Georges Dumézil;⁹⁴ the pattern it identified in the sequence of races was ABBAAB,⁹⁵ where the ὕβρις (B) of the Silver race (134: the first occurrence of this word in the poem) opposed the δίκη (A) of the Golden men in

⁹² Most (1997). ⁹³ Explicitly in Von Fritz (1947) 240.

⁹⁴ Vernant (1960), defended in Vernant (1966).

⁹⁵ Walcot (1961) 4–7, dealing only with the first four races, also saw here an ABBA pattern.

the sphere of kingship and religion, the Bronze and Heroic races embody the violent (B) and just (A) aspects of the warrior function, respectively, and the two parts of the Iron race (present and future) represent the positive (A) and then the negative (B) possibilities for the agricultural function. The idea that the races narrative presents a spectrum of possibilities for humanity has been followed up at least once,⁹⁶ but has drawn as much criticism as praise. For the narrative order matters, to ancient Greece at any rate (the 'noble lie' of Plato's *Republic* 3, an overtly synchronic reworking, is unusual within antiquity).⁹⁷

Still, in finding a structure based on δίκη and ὕβρις within the story, Vernant was the first to emphasize what the account of the races achieves in its immediate and broader contexts of Hesiod's argument. The sequence establishes a moral polarity, brought out by the choice of the future Iron race to honour the criminal and the man of outrage (ὕβριν / ἀνέρα 191–2) instead of the man who keeps his oath, the just man (δικαίου 190) and the good one, which is the foundation for the ensuing exhortation to Perses and the kings to choose justice rather than fostering outrageousness (213). Only after this does the speaker develop the opposition, in the image of a race between δίκη and ὕβρις in which justice eventually wins out (217–18) and the successive portraits of two cities, 'those who give straight judgments (δίκας . . . / ἰθείας 225–6) to strangers and inhabitants' and 'those who care only for evil outrageousness' (ὕβρις τε μέμηλε κακή 238).

Hints of the relevance of the races narrative to the reality outside the myth are found in verbal reminiscences of all the races in the description of these Just and Unjust cities. Details of the Golden and Heroic races are resituated in the images of the Just City, and aspects of the Silver, Bronze and Iron races are recalled by the fortunes of its opposite number. There are, first, thematic parallels: the insistent presence of a destructive Zeus in the description of the Unjust City (*WD* 239, 242, 245, 247) picks up his role in destroying the Silver men (138) and the first race of Iron (180). Just as the gods will bestow hard toils on the men of Iron (χαλεπὰς μερίμνας 178), so

⁹⁶ E.g. Sihvola (1989).

⁹⁷ See Hartman (1988) on Plato's interpretation in the light of trifunctional schemes.

for those in the Unjust City, Zeus brings forth ‘woe from the sky’ (242). Specific verbal echoes are also heard: it may not be ‘of its own accord’, but in the Just City, ‘the grain-giving earth bears crops’ (καρπὸν . . . φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα 237) recalling its fertility for the Golden men (117) and for the heroes (172–3). Again, the Golden men’s festivities (θαλίῃσι 115) and their living in (or off) the fields (ἔργ’ ἐνέμοντο 119) are picked up in the Just City: θαλίης δὲ μεμηλότα ἔργα νέμονται (231).⁹⁸ Syntactic echoes reinforce the sense of déjà-vu in these universal portraits. Compare the plague-free lives of those who do true justice (οὐδέ ποτ’ ἰθυδίκησι μετ’ ἀνδράσι λιμὸς ὀπηδεῖ / οὐδ’ ἄτη, θαλίης δὲ 230–1), and their lack of need to travel (οὐδ’ ἐπὶ νηῶν / νίσονται, καρπὸν δὲ φέρει 236–7) with the description of the life enjoyed by the Golden men, free from wretched old age (οὐδέ τι δειλὸν / γῆρας ἐπῆν, αἰεὶ δὲ πόδας 113–14).⁹⁹ Such negative formulations of prosperity were picked up by Roman writers (see Ovid, [ch. 5](#)).

The fall-out of the races narrative in the discourse of the *Works and Days* does not stop here. A sort of coda emerges at *Works and Days* 280–5 in highlighting the reward and punishment due to the family or generation (γενεῇ) of the oath-keeper and the oath-breaker respectively,¹⁰⁰ while notable features of the end of the Iron race, in particular, find repeated echoes through the poem (see [section 2.6](#) below). I shall give here just two examples. The nightmare image within the story of scowling Envy accompanying wretched humans (ζῆλος δ’ ἀνθρώποισιν διζυροῖσιν . . . / . . . ὁμαρτήσῃ στυγερῶπης 195–6) is picked up in the idea of famine as a ‘companion’ to the man who does not work (λιμὸς . . . ἀεργῷ σύμφορος ἀνδρὶ 302). Again, the dishonour of aged parents, which prevails in the time when destruction by Zeus is imminent for the Iron race, is recalled by the warning of Zeus’s punishment ‘at the end’ for those who upbraid their aged parents ‘with harsh words’ (χαλεποῖσι . . . ἐπέεσσιν 332 – cf. 186).

⁹⁸ On the reverberation of these lines backwards and forwards in the poem, cf. Blusch (1970) 103–7.

⁹⁹ Phrases in the description of the unjust community pointedly echo this syntax to create a stark contrast (οὐδέ γυναῖκες τίκτουςιν, μινύθουσι δὲ οἶκοι 244).

¹⁰⁰ On this passage in its context, see Gagné (2010).

Yet however precisely the ideas expressed by the races may be tied to the *Works and Days*’ overall message about the current state of affairs and the prospects for Perses, kings and farmers in the present, it is undeniable that a sequential experience of the text leaves open the question of the exact place of the account in the argument. Its immediate introduction poses a challenge to anyone considering the story’s relevance to the rest of the poem. The interpretation of *WD* 106–8 remains an issue on which almost every critic feels compelled to comment.

2.4 Framing the races

The *QED* of the speaker’s first extended move into mythology is the reason why humans have to work for a living (‘for the gods keep concealed the means of life (βίον) from human beings’ 42). The narrative of the advent of Pandora and the havoc she caused does offer an explanation, although its concluding emphasis is rather on the impossibility of escaping the will of Zeus (‘thus (οὐτως) there is no way’ 105; Zeus’s anger and contest of wits with Prometheus was the starting-point at v. 47).¹⁰¹ The argumentative efficacy of the ‘myth of the races’, by contrast, has been more debated, because the thrust of the story as it stands is less easily reconciled with the given reason for introducing it. The introduction reads as follows:

Εἰ δ’ ἐθέλεις, ἕτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω,
εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως· σὺ δ’ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν,
ὥς ὁμόθεν γεγάασι θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ’ ἀνθρώποι.

If you wish, I shall recapitulate another story, well and skilfully, and you lay it up in your spirit: how from the same source have come into being gods and mortal human beings. (*Works and Days* 106–8)

This is all that the text explicitly provides as to the ‘point’ of the sequence of races, for its ending does not offer a οὐτως clause like that of 105 to conclude the Pandora narrative. Rather, the imminent miseries of the Iron race build to the grim prediction that when the

¹⁰¹ However, as Rowe (1978) observes on this line, the very similar moral drawn from the Prometheus story in *Theogony* 613 (ὥς οὐκ ἔστι Διὸς κλέψαι νόον οὐδὲ παρελθεῖν) fits better in that context.

shrouded figures of Aidos and Nemesis head for Olympus, abandoning mortals, ‘there will be no defence against evil’ (*WD* 201), and the poet immediately moves on to direct a different story towards the kings (202). As a result, the critical search for the ‘message’ of the ‘myth of the races’ focused all the more on vv. 106–8.

The basic problem is that as it stands, the content of the metallic narrative does not easily correspond to the literal meaning of the $\omega\varsigma$ -clause in 108. In consequence, several modern scholars have athetized the line, although it appears in papyri and all the manuscripts.¹⁰² The phrase $\acute{\alpha}\mu\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\nu$ γεγάσσι appears to indicate a blood relationship,¹⁰³ and could refer to Earth,¹⁰⁴ who features in Hesiod’s *Theogony* starting at v. 126 as the common parent of all cosmic forces, the Giants and the Melian nymphs who are somehow connected with the origin of humans (*Th.* 563). Alternatively the common origin may be the Titans, the source of both gods and men according to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (vv. 335–6).¹⁰⁵ But even granting this, it seems immediately overturned by the statement in vv. 109–10 that ‘the deathless gods made a golden race of mortal men’. The λόγος then details further creations of humans ($\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\iota$ 143) rather than gods. One interpretation, to be sure, points out that some of those creations *become* immortal: Walcot, declaring θεοί (108) identical with δαίμονες (122 – the eventual fate of the Golden men) and noting μάκαρας θνητοί (141) as the fate of the Silver, argues that $\acute{\alpha}\mu\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\nu$ in 108 refers to Zeus, the creator of both immortal and mortal γένη.¹⁰⁶ Such a focus on literal consistency, however, does not encourage reflection on the nature and functioning of mythical narrative, let alone the inventiveness of its ancient interpreters.

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge the assumptions, entailed in any reading, regarding the degree of metaphor and the kind of consistency expected within the *Works and Days*, across the corpus attributed to Hesiod and beyond that in Greek epic. For

¹⁰² Austin (2008) 78 reviews the bibliography.

¹⁰³ Cf. e.g. *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 135. ¹⁰⁴ Cf. Pindar *Nemean* 6.1–2.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. e.g. Verdenius (1962), Gatz (1967) 35, Redfield (1993) 53.

¹⁰⁶ Walcot (1961) 6–7. Calame (2004) 77, 80 speaks of ‘a form of immortality’ for Silver men.

instance, in order to avoid having to deny that 106–8 provides any kind of introduction to what follows,¹⁰⁷ more metaphorical translations of 108 have been proposed, such as ‘from a common background’ or ‘started on the same terms’.¹⁰⁸ Such translations refer to the Golden men within the story, living ‘like gods’ (ὥστε θεοί 112), to the original closeness between gods and men hinted at by Hesiod’s account of their ‘reaching a settlement’ at Mekone (ἐκρίνοντο *Theogony* 535) and by the *Catalogue* fr. 1.6–7 M–W (‘For at that time the feasts were in common and in common the councils / for the immortal gods and for mortal human beings’). Recent scholarly emphasis on the ‘interconnectedness’ of Hesiodic poetry leaves open the question of how far ‘Hesiod’ offers complementary perspectives on the world (divine and human) or a cycle of self-consciously connected poems (see above, [section 1.2c](#)).

Similar questions arise in the interpretation of ἕτερον in 106. On one level, the life of the Golden men replays the felicity enjoyed by mortals who lived pre-Pandora (*WD* 90ff: ‘For previously the tribes of men used to live upon the earth entirely apart from evils’). In themselves, however, such points of contact with the preceding narrative do not pin down the *aim* of offering a ἕτερο[ς] λόγος[ς]. It is still unclear whether we are to expect just ‘another tale’ (e.g. about humanity’s present misery)¹⁰⁹ or, understanding ἕτερον in the stronger sense of ‘the other/alternative’ account, some kind of corrective to the Prometheus-Pandora story.¹¹⁰ From the perspective of Hesiod’s reception, what matters is the potential that the word opens up. I shall demonstrate that the phrase in Hesiod prompted Plato and (differently) Aratus to exploit its marked status within Hesiod’s poem as an unusual narrative act, and encouraged

¹⁰⁷ Teggart (1947) 62 declares simply that 106–8, ‘I’ll tell you how from one seed spring gods and mortal men’, is never followed up.

¹⁰⁸ Respectively, Grene (1996) 39 and West (1978) 178.

¹⁰⁹ So West (1978) 172 with Homeric parallels, Rossi (1997) 8 on this as a *casual* link. Sourvinou-Inwood (1997) on the races emphasizes the tolerance of plurality in Greek mythology more broadly.

¹¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Beye (1972) 37, Fontenrose (1974) 14, Ballabriga (1998) and (strongly) Most (1993) 90. *LfrgE* lists ἕτερος primarily as ‘der andere von zwei’, then (without article) as ‘another of many, with a sense of difference’; examples given for this are mainly Hesiodic, including *WD* 106.

Ovid to situate a metallic narrative within his epic of *multiple* creations and explanations.¹¹¹

The wider issue involved in the interpretation of 106–8 is that of Hesiod's relation to the diction as well as the content of the corpus of Greek epic.¹¹² One reading of ὁμόθεν γεγάασι, referring to the single use of ὁμόθεν in Homer, argues that the phrase emphasizes not so much the single origin of gods and men but their respective differentiation into dissimilarity and conflict (i.e. 'from the same sources have come [different beings]').¹¹³ Thematically, this nicely justifies Hesiod's inclusion of the Heroic race, if one recalls its traditional association, via the Trojan War, with the end of divine-human interaction (see p. 35 above). Hence too, perhaps, the perfect tense of γεγάασι and the emphasis on dissimilarity in the description of the Iron men: οὐδὲ πατήρ παίδεσσιν ὁμοίος οὐδέ τι παῖδες (182). Rhetorically, an emphasis on differentiation reflects in myth the development of discord between Hesiod and Perses, as well as the prominence of strife as a traditional subject of heroic *epos*.

In this respect, the interpretation may be situated within scholarship exploiting the possibility that vv. 106–8 need not be taken as an exact summary¹¹⁴ of what follows, but rather as identifying the moral that Perses as an individual should draw from it. The model of Homeric syntax would make 108 dependent on ἕτερον λόγον, with σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν (107) understood as a parenthesis, such that the onus of interpretation is on ἕτερον, as seen above.

¹¹¹ E.g. Haubold (2010) 25–8, with an eye to Plato's rewriting of the metals as a 'noble fiction'. On the marked quality of *Aratus*' λόγος ἄλλος (*Ph.* 100), see ch. 4.

¹¹² On Hesiod's diction by comparison with Homer's, see Edwards (1977). Entire verses are adapted for new purposes, e.g. 515 in reference to the rain: 'it goes through the hide of an ox, and this does not stop it' seems to parody Homeric descriptions of a spear penetrating a shield.

¹¹³ Peabody (1975) 248–50, citing Homer *Od.* 5.475–93, where ὁμόθεν refers to two dissimilar types of olive growing from a single root or spot. In a conscious corrective to most readers' 'phenomenological fix on Pandora', Peabody argues that the 'other' narrative, of the races, develops one half of the 'diploid formula' θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ' ἀνθρώποι (108) of which the first half, differentiation between divine forces, was developed in the *Erides* passage.

¹¹⁴ The meaning of ἐκκορυφώσω remains elusive, but in translating 'recapitulate', Most (2006) captures both aspects of the main dispute, i.e. 'state summarily' (West (1978)) and 'bring to a conclusion', 'tell from beginning to end' (Verdenius (1985)). For more options, see ch. 3 n. 235. Whatever the compound in 106 denotes, 108 narrows the focus towards a single aspect of the λόγος.

If 108 is taken as dependent on 107, however (‘and you lay up in your spirit how from one source’ etc.), it is easier to divide the ‘point’ of the ‘myth of the races’ itself (on which see [sections 2.3 and 2.6](#)) from the message that the myth offers to Perses in particular.¹¹⁵ A comparable debate concerns the extent of consideration for the listener implied by εἰ δ’ ἐθέλεις in 106 (‘if you wish’), evaluated with an eye to its uses in Homer.¹¹⁶

Yet the reality remains, that if really integrated into the project of the *Works and Days*, the thrust of the narrative as it appears in the text should coincide with its moral for Perses. The only other time φρεσὶ βάλλειο σῆσι occurs in the poem is as part of an exhortation to Perses to turn to justice and leave his violent ways (274). There too the plan of Zeus has been mentioned just beforehand (273 – cf. 105). In linking the two admonitions, we infer that 107, too, forms part of the larger project of persuading Perses to turn to δίκη, if not also to work (recall 27–9). The fact that ἐγὼ emerges at 106 for the first time since the end of the proem (10) suggests that the story has the force of a ‘second proem’, and indeed all the close readers of the *Works and Days* in this book offer revisions of the myth of races at comparable points in their works. I shall argue that the framing of the ‘myth of the races’ in Hesiod prompts reflection on the role of a mythical narrative in a wider argumentative project. The next three sections of this chapter outline the most prominent possibilities within Hesiod, to prepare the ground for later readings.

2.5 Structures in the ‘myth of the races’

Bearing in mind the range of ancient responses to Hesiod’s account, which are the real subject of this book, it is unsurprising that Vernant’s interpretation, based on the binary opposition of ὕβρις and δίκη across three social functions, has been criticized for over-simplifying or emphasizing aspects of the text to fit the

¹¹⁵ Crubellier (1996) 445: ‘chacun des deux discours forme une entité autonome’, so that it is up to the listener to infer their common truth – he explicitly (447) places the task of connection on 107. For this view of the syntax cf. Verdenius (1985) on this passage, Rosenmeyer (1957) 282.

¹¹⁶ Haubold (2010) 26 emphasizes its ‘presumption of a willing audience’ and the ‘theoretical choice’ to refuse attention. Cf. my n. 146 below. Beall (2005/6) 164 notes that in Homeric speeches it ‘prefaces something different’ to come.

projected structure. For instance, it has been pointed out that the connection between silver and royalty, required by the opposition between δίκη and ὕβρις that Vernant finds in the ‘kingship’ sphere, is nowhere in Hesiod’s text, while the connection between gold and royalty is based only on the ‘royal honour’ they held in their afterlives as guardian spirits.¹¹⁷ Again, the sequence presents a decline not only of moral but also, and initially, of material conditions (there is no mention of δίκη in the lifetime of the Golden men).¹¹⁸ Indeed, this is particularly important to highlight for the account in Hesiod, who (unlike, for instance, Aratus or Ovid) specifies for each race a post-mortem fate, which modern readers strain to see as morally warranted by the ‘lives’.¹¹⁹ The overtly moralizing spin comes from Hesiod’s ancient readers (see chs. 3 and 4 below; the trend appears to have been set by Pindar *Olympian* 2.67–88 on the Blessed Isles as a post-mortem destination for all *just* men).

Rather than insisting on a single, coherent structure as *the* way to read the story, it is more productive to accept that its detailed narration supports a plurality of structures. Exemplary in this respect is Querbach, whose analysis detects within the text not one but three different patterns of binary opposition between the first four races (that is, omitting Iron). He does label Golden and Heroic races a ‘better’ pair against ‘worse’ Silver and Bronze, but also because in death they become ‘semi-divinities’ as opposed to ‘humans’. He then divides Golden and Silver races from Heroic and Bronze on a chronological axis; finally, he pairs the Silver and Heroic races as ‘transitional’ (in contrast with the ‘simplicity’ of the Golden and Bronze eras), in the sense that these stages, admittedly in silence, effect transitions in distance from the gods, in diet,

¹¹⁷ Brown (1998) cites instead the widespread archaic association between gold and imperishable divinity; on its association with kingship, more evident in e.g. Pindar and Herodotus, see Kurke (1999).

¹¹⁸ Carrière (1996) 414 on golden prosperity. Their explicit association with δίκη stems from *WD* 124–5, which *may* have been interpolated from 254–5; they are also ‘dear to the gods’ in v. 120, but this line appears only in the quotation of Hesiod by Diodorus. Nelson (1998) 76 emphasizes that when resources are unlimited (116–17: ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα / τοῖσιν ἔην) there is no incentive to resort to sin.

¹¹⁹ Plato’s re-conception of Golden ‘guardians’ (φύλακες) in the *Republic*, which refers primarily to their post-mortem status, is a self-conscious exception even among his own readings of Hesiod’s races.

in degree of warfare and between the spheres of Cronus and Zeus.¹²⁰ These binary oppositions are presented openly as critical extrapolations from selected details of Hesiod’s text; they are not asserted to the exclusion of other ideas. Whether for philosophical or satirical purposes, Hesiod’s ancient readers exploited details similarly, as my forthcoming chapters indicate.

In addition to his structural demonstrations, Querbach considers how the myth might be functioning in its rhetorical context.¹²¹ He reads the Iron race as added by Hesiod in order to emphasize more strongly the devastating effects of ὕβρις, under the present threat of hubristic behaviour on the part of Perses and the judges. This combination of emphases was the foundation for Glenn Most’s reading of Hesiod’s narrative as supporting two structures: first, it implicitly sets an idea of ‘humanity’ (Bronze-Heroes-Iron) against (as he argues) literally Gold and Silver races, to emphasize that *we*, unlike those far-off figures free from toil, must a) work and b) take responsibility for our lives. This is achieved also through a four-part articulation that blurs the line between Iron men and the ‘previous generation’ (προτέρη γενεή 160), in that the Heroes are the first group in the sequence whose members do not all have the same fate. The nested oppositions in describing their lives and deaths (*WD* 161–70: τοὺς μὲν ... τοὺς μὲν ... τοὺς δὲ ... τοὺς μὲν ... τοῖς δὲ ... τοὶ μὲν) leave room for debate as to whether all or some of the ‘heroes’ died in the Trojan and Theban wars, and whether it was (some or all of) the dead, or rather the survivors, who were resettled on the Blessed Isles.¹²² Most finds here ‘various outcomes’ of the heroes and argues that these enable Hesiod’s

¹²⁰ Querbach (1985) 2–8. See below, [sect. 2.6](#), for textual evidence of their relative complexity.

¹²¹ Thus avoiding an objection like that of Crubellier (1996) 436: Vernant’s analysis ignores ‘le mouvement proper de l’énunciation’ of this myth; more generally, it is a weakness of the structuralist viewpoint that ‘le déroulement du récit ne serait que l’effet des contraintes de l’exposition’.

¹²² Fontenrose (1974) 9–10 notes that ‘heroes’ were necessarily a minority of those in the ‘heroic’ age. Carrière (1996) 414 follows Verdenius (1985) 102 on *WD* 167 in thinking the Hesiodic account a compromise between Homer’s position (cf. *Od.* 4. 561–9: those who did not die went to the Blessed Isles) and that of Pindar *Ol.* 2. 67–88, where all just men go there. Nelson (1998) 70 and Clay (2003) 92–3 think that some of the Heroic race go.

listeners to think about them as individuals, and the heroes' diverse fates as relevant to their own.¹²³

Therefore, whether or not the myth is understood as aiming at Perses in particular, it is worth considering further here the emphases within the narrative, in order to note later on how creatively they were appropriated for different post-Hesiodic projects.

2.6 Emphases in the narrative of the races

Stimulated by Most's assertion that a sequence simply charting inevitable degeneration would be rhetorically inept in urging Perses to try to be just,¹²⁴ I now examine how factors such as the discontinuity of Hesiod's sequence, the presence of 'more just and better' heroes and the wealth of intriguing detail about each of the metallic races function in the context of the speaker's ethical exhortation. It is important to emphasize, however, that no solution so far put forward is entirely free from objections, and even if one were found, it is unlikely that any single reading would account for all the ways in which Perses, let alone the other addressees of Hesiod's narrative, might relate to it. As will be demonstrated later through Plato's uses of Hesiod's races for the *Republic*, in particular, an ambiguous paradigm can be just as valid a didactic strategy as a simple vision of excellence or mediocrity, in urging a person to take ethical responsibility.

The term for every stage in the sequence is γένος, which covers both 'race' and 'era'; the emphasis within this term appears to shift from one to the other over the course of Hesiod's narrative. The gods create a new γένος at least four times,¹²⁵ and 'race' (or 'kind', as in 'humankind')¹²⁶ is certainly paramount when the gods make the Golden men, but the sense of a distinct 'era' perhaps takes precedence over 'race' by the end of the sequence, which strongly

¹²³ Most (1997) 110 and 117–19. Relevance or appropriateness to an immediate social context seems to have been valued among early audiences: Ford (2002) chs. 2–3.

¹²⁴ Most (1997) 108.

¹²⁵ The uncertain transition between the fourth and fifth stages in the sequence leaves the origins of the fifth, 'Iron', race unclear.

¹²⁶ Currie (2012) 41, well conveying the paradoxical discontinuity of this 'human history'.

emphasizes the present.¹²⁷ Discontinuity is formalized also by the repeated acts of creation, distribution and destruction in the myth, but the ‘ethical’ effect is of quietly reiterating the omnipotence of Zeus.¹²⁸ Through this, the narrative does, in the event, build on the explicit moral of the Prometheus-Pandora tale, that Zeus’s will is inescapable (105). Walcot’s Zeus-centred interpretation of the races may be challenged in details, but its emphasis on paradigms of ‘becoming immortal’ is valuable in suggesting how Perses might hear in the myth a meditation on his actual and potential relation to divinity, and this is how one scholiast takes it.¹²⁹ As protreptic, the thrust of the ‘myth of the races’ would be that now the Golden Age is over, the only way to get close to the gods again is through practising δίκη.¹³⁰

The placement of ‘more just’ Heroes immediately before the Iron race could contribute to such a message in several ways. Their designation as ‘semi-divine’ is tantalizingly introduced from the viewpoint of the present audience as the ‘previous generation’ (160), and their afterlife on the Blessed Isles functions as an aspirational image (recall its echoes in the sketch of the Just City) with which the future of the Iron race (its details picked up in the Unjust City) contrasts as markedly as can be.¹³¹ However, for Most, as I noted (pp. 74–5 above), the layers of μέν and δέ in the description emphasize rather the Heroes’ individuality; in this function he well points out the sudden influx of proper names in 162–5 (Thebes, Cadmus, Oedipus, Troy, Helen). Nevertheless, his conclusion that the Heroes offer ‘models of moral choice’ for current (Iron) men strikes me as a Platonic interpretation rather than a Hesiodic

¹²⁷ NB the priority of νῦν (‘Now’) in νῦν γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον (*WD* 176; see [sect. 2.7](#) below), as well as the sense of the Heroes as the ‘generation’ before our own.

¹²⁸ *WD* 110, 122, 128, 138, 143, 158, 168, 180. Cf. Sorel (1982), Nelson (1998) 70, Clay (2003) 143–8.

¹²⁹ See p. 69 above, with *Σ WD* 108 (108a in Pertusi (1955) 48): ‘the line seems pretentious [ἄλαζονικός], but by these means he [Perses?] is turned to virtue. If we are kin with gods, it must be considered that we are kin with the good.’ Compare n. 64 above.

¹³⁰ So Nicolai (1964) 49–50. Compare the differing emphasis on the theme of divine-human relations in Clay (2003) 88–95 (building on Benardete (1967) 156–9), who attributes the shape of the myth to divine trial and error in creating a worshipper: e.g. ‘childish weakness’ in the Silver race is ‘over-compensated’ in the aggressive Bronze race. For this, as she notes (85), the order of the races is crucial.

¹³¹ Falkner (1989) 57 notes the contrast.

emphasis,¹³² given that the primary connotation of the Heroic generation when viewed as a whole in Greek hexameter poetry seems to be the irreversible distancing of divine and human realms. If distance is emphasized, the introduction of δίκη at this juncture in the sequence raises the question of whether it compensates for humanity's lack of divine protection.¹³³

Such reflection suggests that the descriptions of each past race, in addition to the structures and messages they present in combination, may also, taken individually, have something to offer Perses in his situation, not as unequivocally positive or negative images to follow or avoid, but precisely insofar as they prompt reflection on their humanity or society.¹³⁴ Lucretius' ambiguous 'culture history' in *De rerum natura* 5 might be seen as an exemplary large-scale 'reading' of such a didactic strategy (p. 12 n. 54 above). The first overt example, however, of how antiquity picks up both positive and negative implications of a *single* metallic description is the meditation in Plato's *Statesman* on the desirability of the lives of Hesiod's 'men in the time of Cronus' (on which see ch. 3 below). Since the Bronze and Silver races are less often discussed individually, I shall focus in the rest of this section on issues emerging from their descriptions that I find productive for responses to Hesiod.

There is a real question mark, I would argue, over the humanity of the Bronze race, the structural hinge of the sequence of five races. In going 'nameless' to Hades (νόωνμοι 154) and in using (rather than being) bronze (χαλκῷ . . . εἰργάζοντο 151), this group is declared to be the first race 'like us' in the sequence¹³⁵ (and the parenthetical 'there was no black iron', 151, makes explicit in the text the archaeological as well as mythical viewpoint of the present, 'Iron' race). Yet they are said to have hearts of adamant (147), and it has been observed that 'unapproachable' Bronze men with 'untouchable hands from their shoulders' (ἄπλαστοι . . . χεῖρες

¹³² The combination of individual moral choice and the entire sequence of post-mortem fates would be worth thinking about from the perspective of Plato's myth of Er.

¹³³ A fertile idea for Plato, perhaps: compare Glaucon's thought experiment in *Republic* 2 about true justice as inadequate protection compared with an invisible cloak.

¹³⁴ For this principle see Jensen (1966) 18, and Fontenrose (1974) *passim*.

¹³⁵ Most (1997) 110, contrasting (116) the prior generations as literally metallic.

ἄπτοιοι / ἐξ ὤμων *WD* 148–9) recall the hundred-handed Titans of *Theogony* 151–2, while their anthropogony ‘from ash trees’ (ἐκ μελιᾶν *WD* 145) coincides with the *Theogony*’s account of primordial man, associated somehow with ash trees (187, 563) and closely related to the Giants. The sinister quality of the verses beginning with such expressions is captured by the idea that the Bronze men represent the dark side of humankind.¹³⁶ Certainly Ovid, for one, exploits in his rewriting of the races the potential for overlap with the Giants (see [ch. 5](#) below).

Conversely, the Silver men are often interpreted as literally inhuman. Yet this race, as a stage in an argument aimed at Perses, achieves far more than has yet been recognized, even though it has been noted many times that Silver man, like Perses himself, is characterized as very foolish (μέγα νήπιος 131).¹³⁷ In fact, the allegations against Perses as overly concerned with the household and failing to respect the division of the inheritance (37–8) are also paralleled in the description of this second race.¹³⁸ It is worth pausing here to demonstrate how the description of the Silver race in particular might resonate with the internal audience, bearing in mind that the inclusion of a ‘next-best’ stage marks out a ‘post-Hesiodic’ narrative of races (i.e. one engaging specifically with the sequence in Hesiod), beyond the independently developing tradition of the Golden paradise.

First, by comparison with the portrait of the eternally youthful and prosperous Golden race, the shape of the Silver race description seems designed to catch the attention of the audience. The initial details of the Golden men’s uneventful lives ‘like gods with hearts at ease, free from toil and trouble’ (ὥστε θεοὶ δ’ ἔζωον ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες / νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνων καὶ διζύος 112–13), if not already traditional,¹³⁹ will sound familiar because *WD* 90–2 has already prepared the ground for the idea of a lost paradise. And although other ideas are then introduced, the syntax, a series of

¹³⁶ Cf. e.g. Nagy (1979) 157–9 for this emphasis on the Bronze warriors, viewed in relation to Achilles.

¹³⁷ Cf. e.g. Hunt (1981) 33–4, Schmidt (1986) 31–40, Calame (2004) 77.

¹³⁸ As Rand (1911) 139 observes. Compare the Silver men living ᾧ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ for a century (130–1) and failing to apportion to the gods their due (135–7).

¹³⁹ On the question of whether the Golden race was Hesiod’s invention, cf. first Baldry (1952) and Gwyn Griffiths (1956), with West (1978) on this passage.

short and simple phrases connected by δέ (116, 117, 118) creates a deceptively straightforward impression of a narrative already known to the hearer.¹⁴⁰ The account of the Silver race, by contrast, is much more arresting:

ἀλλ' ἑκατὸν μὲν παῖς ἔτεα παρὰ μητέρι κενεῖ
 ἐτρέφετ' ἀτάλλων, μέγα νήπιος, ὃ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ·
 ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἄρ' ἠβήσαι τε καὶ ἡβης μέτρον ἴκοιτο,
 παυρίδιον ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χρόνον, ἄλγε' ἔχοντες
 ἀφραδίης· ὕβριν γὰρ ἀτάσθαλον οὐκ ἐδύναντο
 ἀλλήλων ἀπέχειν, οὐδ' ἀθανάτους θεραπεύειν
 ἦθελον.

A boy would be nurtured for a hundred years at the side of his cherished mother, playing in his own house, a great fool. But when they reached adolescence and arrived at the full measure of puberty, they would live for a short time only, suffering pains because of their acts of folly. For they could not restrain themselves from wicked outrage against each other nor were they willing to honor the immortals. (*Works and Days* 130–6, trans. Most)

It contains at least one marked transition, from childhood to adulthood, and pulls the listener this way and that with the succession of sentences linked by ἀλλά (130, 132, also 142), αὐτε (127) or αὐτάρ (140) (the post-mortem fate, to be called ὑποχθόνιοι μάκαρες θνητοί ('subterranean blessed mortals') thereby framed as a further twist).¹⁴¹ Since the details of the Silver race have no counterpart in legend,¹⁴² and since (as Vernant admits) silver does not have a specific symbolic and unchanging meaning of its own,¹⁴³ this description may well be presented for Perses' benefit. It is worth observing, too, that the Golden race description does not involve any notion of human character – this is not present in the λόγος until

¹⁴⁰ If ἐκκορυφώσω (106) means 'summarize' in some degree, the poet has explicitly prepared his audience for this style. On a comparable technique in Homer, cf. Scodel (2002) ch. 5. On compression as a feature of Hesiod's style, at least for the Prometheus narratives, see Carter Philips (1973).

¹⁴¹ So translated by Tandy and Neale (1996) as if the opinion of the Silver race is revised after their demise: 'These Zeus . . . hid away in his anger . . . But ever since the earth covered over this race, these are called blessed.' However, Clay (2003) 89 argues that these verses are apotropaic.

¹⁴² As West (1978) 174 notes. Meyer (1966) 501 argued that Hesiod took over the Golden Age from older traditions, but invented the Silver Age, to explain the degeneration from past to present.

¹⁴³ Vernant (1960) 33. There is little evidence independent of Hesiod, unless we count the Orphic version; see p. 31 above, with n. 133.

129, which describes the Silver race as ‘like the golden neither in body *nor in mind*’ (χρυσέῳ οὔτε φῦν ἐναλίγκιον οὔτε νόημα).¹⁴⁴

Most importantly, until he hears about the Silver men, Perses is given no sense of the causal link between the behaviour of an individual and that of the community of which he is a part. In contrast to the Golden and Bronze races, in which the characters are unchanging and form an undifferentiated group from start to finish, the story of the Silver race offers a cautionary tale; it lays bare how a spoilt, foolish and lazy individual becomes part of a lawless society. At least one ancient ‘reader’ of Hesiod’s races, Plato’s character Protagoras, makes this lesson explicit; his creative blend of Hesiod’s two great myths of human history, Prometheus and the races, asserts that a society made up of individuals without social virtue will fall into mutual wrongdoing (*Protagoras* 322b: see 3.2 below). Within Hesiod’s narrative for Perses, the point is suggested through thematic and structural connections between the Silver and Iron races. As the only people before the Iron race for whose destruction Zeus is explicitly responsible (138–9, and cf. 180), those long-lived Silver children find a grotesque echo in the grey-haired babies who will be a sign of doom for the speaker’s contemporaries (180–1). Moreover, a similarly ominous shift of focus, from familial discord to the dismal state of society as a whole, is found in the future of the Iron race:

οὐδὲ πατήρ παιδεύσιν ὁμοίος οὐδέ τι παῖδες
οὐδὲ ξείνος ξεινοδόκῳ καὶ ἑταῖρος ἑταίρω,
οὐδὲ κασίγνητος φίλος ἔσσεται, ὥς τὸ πάρος περ.
αἶψα δὲ γηράσκοντας ἀτιμήσουσι τοκῆας
μέμψονται δ’ ἄρα τοὺς χαλεποὺς βάζοντες ἔπεσσι,
σχέτλιοι, οὐδὲ θεῶν ὅπιν εἰδότες· οὐδὲ κεν οἷ γε
γηράντεσσι τοκεῦσιν ἀπὸ θρεπτῆρια δοῖεν
[χειροδίκα· ἕτερος δ’ ἑτέρου πόλιν ἐξαλαπάξει·]
οὐδὲ τις εὐόρκου χάρις ἔσσεται οὐδὲ δικαίου
οὐδ’ ἀγαθοῦ, μάλλον δὲ κακῶν ῥεκτῆρα καὶ ὕβριν
ἀνέρα τιμήσουσι· δίκη δ’ ἐν χερσὶ· καὶ αἰδῶς
οὐκ ἔσται, βλάψει δ’ ὁ κακὸς τὸν ἀρεῖονα φῶτα
μύθοισι σκολοῖς ἐνέπων, ἐπὶ δ’ ὄρκον ὁμείται.
ζῆλος δ’ ἀνθρώποισιν ὀϊζυροῖσιν ἄπασι
δυσκέλαδος κακὸς ἄρτος ὁμαρτήσῃ στυγερῶπης.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Xenophanes DK 21 B23: ‘One god . . . in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought’.

Embedding the races in Hesiod

Father will not be like-minded with sons, nor sons at all, nor guest with host, nor comrade with comrade, nor will the brother be dear, as he once was. They will dishonor their aging parents at once; they will reproach them, addressing them with grievous words – cruel men, who do not know of the gods’ retribution! – nor would they repay their aged parents for their rearing. [Their hands will be their justice, and one man will destroy the other’s city.] Nor will there be any grace for the man who keeps his oath, nor for the just man or the good one, but they will give more honor to the doer of evil and the outrage¹⁴⁵ man. Justice will be in their hands, and reverence will not exist, but the bad man will harm the superior one, speaking with crooked discourses, and he will swear an oath upon them. And Envy, evil-sounding, gloating, loathsome-faced, will accompany all wretched human beings. (*Works and Days* 182–96, trans. Most)

Such parallels reinforce the fall of the Silver men into ὕβρις as a dramatic warning for Perses.¹⁴⁶ It is not the case that ‘Hybris and Dike are for Hesiod absolute alternatives – there is nothing in between’.¹⁴⁷ The Silver men are central to Hesiod’s rhetoric, which operates on Perses precisely as someone in between, or with the potential for, ὕβρις and δίκη. Indeed, it is ultimately because of the description of the Silver lives that Hesiod can connect the polar opposition of the Just and Unjust cities to a personal choice between δίκη and βίη for Perses (274–5) as a decision of real consequence for the community of which Perses forms a part: ‘Often even a whole city suffers for an evil man who sins and devises presumptuous deeds’ (240–1).

At the same time, the didactic strategy of the races also depends on the shock value of difference between the description of the Iron men and that of the past, a shock felt most directly in the way in which the speaker launches into the present (see below, [sect. 2.7](#)) and in the description of the fate of each race. One school of thought holds that the races story grew out of one about different classes of daemons in ancient Greece, and Hesiod’s status in antiquity as an expert in daemonology has recently been reiterated.¹⁴⁸ Yet there is an apparent lack of fit between the disappointing lives and powerful afterlives of the Silver men. The fleeting

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Fisher (1992) 187–93 on this breakdown in family values as solidifying the notion of ὕβρις.

¹⁴⁶ οὐκ ἠθέλον in 136 (they ‘were not willing’) recalls Hesiod’s invitation to listen (εἰ ... ἐθέλεις 106).

¹⁴⁷ West (1978) on *WD* 134, judging the Silver men ‘hardly better than the Iron race’.

¹⁴⁸ Koning (2010) 165–72.

reference to their afterlife (141–2), secondary (δεύτεροι) to the Golden men but held in honour, defeats any expectation of further dire consequences for their ὕβρις. The Bronze men have no afterlife to speak of; perhaps this is their punishment.¹⁴⁹ Description of the blissful afterlife granted by Zeus to the Heroes he translates to the Blessed Isles (169–73) immediately precedes that of the present era. Both in content and in proportion, then, the contrast between the end of the Iron race and those of the four preceding races is stark. A mere four verses (176–9) describe the immediate future, in which good will still be mixed with evils, but twenty-one portray future downfall, heralded by the warning that ‘Zeus will destroy this race . . . too, when at their birth the hair on their temples will be quite grey’ (180–1). Following this dire prediction, the description of societal disintegration seems to present an ‘afterlife’ of drawn-out misery, stretching into a future when ‘there will be no defence (ἀλκή) against evil’ (201).¹⁵⁰

We are now in a position to consider the speaker’s ‘voice’ in the myth and beyond, focusing on issues relating to authority and didactic strategy that I shall show to be debated in ancient as well as modern responses to Hesiod’s races.

2.7 The emergence of ‘Hesiod’

As the first self-naming author in Western literature, Hesiod vividly invites audiences to ‘hear’ him in his poetry. His self-expression takes various forms. In comparison with the proem of the *Theogony*, with its remarkable emphasis on human and divine voices,¹⁵¹ modern readers have found in the *Works and Days* a Hesiod far more independent of the Muses. His human voice in the

¹⁴⁹ Hainsworth (1993) on *Iliad* 12.70 emphasizes that ‘nameless’ is the worst fate ever. Meillier (1992) thinks the Bronze men represent suicides excluded from the rites and unremembered.

¹⁵⁰ Nelson (1998) 76, noting the rhetorical focus on the Iron race, suggests that the final hardship is not labour and disease, but crooked justice itself. There is support for this idea in the ancient legacy of the Iron race which emphasizes an inversion of values – cf. e.g. Edmunds (1975) on Thucydides 3.82–3.

¹⁵¹ Contrast Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδὴν (*Th.* 22) with the repeated emphasis on the Muses’ voice (δοσσα or αὐδή, at *Th.* 10, 31, 37, 39–43, 65–70, 83–4). See Stoddard (2004).

persona of ‘wisdom poet’ replaces that of Zeus, announcing his own utterance of truths to Perses after calling on Zeus to straighten the verdicts himself (vv. 9–10).¹⁵² The full variety of (actual and potential) ‘voices’ in the *Works and Days*, recently studied from the viewpoint of its ancient receptions,¹⁵³ is beyond the scope of this study, as is any new analysis of ‘voice’ as a concept (which of course goes far beyond ‘tone’);¹⁵⁴ I aim here only to give a sense of ‘Hesiod’ as a speaker within this poem by pausing over a key moment in the narrative of races with three variables in view – optimism / pessimism; levels of authority; personal / universal address¹⁵⁵ – in order to characterize its relation to Hesiodic didaxis more broadly.

The starting and central point of my sketch is the outburst that launches us into the fifth stage in Hesiod’s sequence. Breaking the pattern of narrative transitions documenting the end of one race and the divine creation of another (121–7, 140–3, 152–7),¹⁵⁶ its force can hardly be overemphasized:

μηκέτ’ ἔπειτ’ ὤφελλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι μετεῖναι
ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ’ ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι.
νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον . . .
ἀλλ’ ἔμπης καὶ τοῖσι μεμείξεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν.
Ζεὺς δ’ ὀλέσει καὶ τοῦτο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων.

If only then I no longer had to live among the fifth men, but could have either died first or been born afterwards! For now the race is indeed one of iron . . .

Yet all the same, for these people too good things will be mingled with evil ones. But Zeus will destroy this race of speech-endowed human beings too. (*WD* 174–6, 179–80, trans. Most)

The incursion of a personal voice before a rush of future tenses, a narrative intrusion unparalleled by any narrative comment in the

¹⁵² On the difference from the *Theogony*, see Most (1993), Ledbetter (2003) 56, Tsagalis (2006) 86f.

¹⁵³ Hunter (2014).

¹⁵⁴ Goldhill (1991) applies to Classical texts the wider questions involved.

¹⁵⁵ The ‘quasi-autobiographical’ features of the *Works and Days*, in particular the dispute with Perses, have sometimes distracted from its emphasis on communal address. For the term see Morrison (2007) 30–2, whose narratological study discusses the presentation of self in terms of knowledge, sincerity, authority, mimesis and self-reference.

¹⁵⁶ On the MSS and papyri which preserve 173a–e, evidently interpolated to soften the jarring break of the pattern in 174–6, see West (1978) 194–6 on these lines.

Theogony, is one of the most provocative features of Hesiod’s account of the races. The resentment it expresses has a legacy of its own in antiquity, picked up for example by Callimachus (see below p. 193 n. 109), but the meaning of the second line is still debated; Hesiod seems to appropriate to himself the foregoing sequence of death and birth in relation to each ‘human species’ made by Zeus.¹⁵⁷ The idea that someone ‘should have died beforehand’ is not unique to Hesiod,¹⁵⁸ but ἔπειτα γενέσθαι is more puzzling. Scholars both ancient and modern have inferred that the speaker expects a cyclic renewal of the sequence.¹⁵⁹ Others have argued that it is merely a rhetorical strengthening of the negative weight Hesiod wishes to throw on the present,¹⁶⁰ since a serious expectation would undermine the urgency of the subsequent exhortation to justice.¹⁶¹ Within Hesiod’s text, there is at least one way of reconciling these options,¹⁶² but from the viewpoint of Hesiod’s reception, the barest suggestion of a cosmic cyclical framework in Hesiod’s text will prove to be sufficient for post-Hesiodic writers (such as Empedocles, Plato and Virgil) to expand.

Leaving aside the question about cyclicity, there are other angles from which to consider the force of vv. 174–6 in Hesiod’s argument. Important, I think, are the many linguistic echoes of this outburst in the tone of the personal intervention a hundred lines later, in which the speaker momentarily breaks out of his discourse addressed to the kings:

νῦν δὴ ἐγὼ μῆτ’ αὐτὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιος
εἶην μῆτ’ ἐμὸς υἱός, ἐπεὶ κακὸν ἀνδρα δίκαιον
ἔμμεναι, εἰ μείζω γε δίκην ἀδικώτερος ἔξει.
ἀλλὰ τὰ γ’ οὐπῶ ἔοιπα τελεῖν Δία μητιόεντα.

¹⁵⁷ Calame (2004) 84.

¹⁵⁸ Ercolani (2010) 194–5 on this line cites parallels in the Homeric epics. μηκέτι[ι] (‘no longer’, 174) is, however, unparalleled – see Beall (2005/6) 167.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Σ *WD* 160–1 (Pertusi (1955) 25), with e.g. Vernant (1960) and Hunt (1981) 37, contra e.g. Rosenmeyer (1957) 275–6, who reads it as a ‘colloquial expression’.

¹⁶⁰ Verdenius 1985 on *WD* 175.

¹⁶¹ Most vividly, Clay (2003) 84: ‘Why worry if better days are undoubtedly ahead? Why change one’s evil ways?’ Her ingenious solution is that if Hesiod were born into the worst Iron race, he too would be unjust and so would not feel its pain. For earlier bibliography on Hesiod’s ‘moderate optimism’ in other passages, see Most (1997) 117.

¹⁶² Vidal-Naquet (1960): the essential quality of the Iron race is precisely to live unhappily in time, and the repetition or cyclicity of the farmer’s year is the ‘remedy’ offered by the *Works and Days*. Certainly, the double switch of tenses in the Iron race, from past to present, and present to future, draws attention to temporal existence.

Embedding the races in Hesiod

Right now may I myself not be a just man among human beings, neither I nor a son of mine, since it is evil for a man to be just if the more unjust one will receive greater justice. But I do not anticipate that the counsellor Zeus will bring this about yet. (*Works and Days* 270–3, trans. adapted from Most)

Likewise beginning from the speaker's present existence among humans, likewise involving a wish and a prediction involving Zeus, is this 'right now . . . not yet' a restatement, or a modification, of the prior wish 'no longer' to live and to be born later (with the attendant qualification, v. 179)? One might argue that with the assertion that he does not want his son to be just (δικαίος), the speaker conveys a sense that the world is even worse than he thought, i.e. cancelling the former thought. Again, this could be as 'purely rhetorical' as the speaker's initial wish. Still this does not negate the fact that in *Works and Days*, the sense of personal danger and the prophecy of doom deserve emphasis, since they explain the *need* to tell the story, as mere longing for a lost paradise does not. The portrait of headlong movement towards destruction turns out to justify the existence of the entire *Works and Days*, the performance of the poet's speech,¹⁶³ as the only form of hope/anticipation (ἐλπίς 96), the only 'defence' (ἀλκή 201), for beleaguered mankind. Indeed, the poem ends by asserting that it has provided knowledge essential for avoiding the anger of the gods:

τάων εὐδαίμων τε καὶ ὄλβιος ὃς τάδε πάντα
εἰδὼς ἐργάζεται ἀναίτιος ἀθανάτοισιν,
ὄρνιθας κρίνων καὶ ὑπερβασίας ἀλεείνων.

Happy and blessed is he who knows all these things and does his work without giving offense to the immortals, distinguishing the birds and avoiding trespasses. (*Works and Days* 826–8, trans. Most)

Put differently, what is the relationship set up by Hesiod's account of the races between the speaker and the will of Zeus? We have seen that the self-reference at *WD* 174 effectively replaces 'Zeus made' in the introduction to each race, as (in a way) did the first 'I' of the poem in v. 10. On another reading, Hesiod's subsequent instructions to Perses to 'listen now to Justice' re-present the

¹⁶³ Cf. Calame (2005) 53 on how v. 176 ('now the race is of iron') establishes as concurrent the time of the story and that of the enunciation.

speaker himself as 'mouthpiece of the Right',¹⁶⁴ she who is presented as ally and informer for Zeus (256–60).

The question about the speaker's relationship to the will of Zeus is in turn a prompt to consider the speaker's authority. The Hesiodic voice is often simply designated 'authoritative'.¹⁶⁵ Certainly the position from which the speaker gives out the ethical and practical advice in the second two-thirds of the poem implies his rare access to the elusive will of Zeus (483–4), obliquely implied by the structure of the prologue.¹⁶⁶ Deserving more attention in studies of Hesiod's legacy, however, is the part played by the races narrative in the *Works and Days* in inviting exploration of the relationship between the different strands of the speaker's didactic force, both an inspired poet and an ethical expert.¹⁶⁷

Although the new accounts of Strife and of Pandora are what establishes the speaker's status as a storyteller, it is the vatic quality of the races narrative that most prominently advertises the speaker as being in a position to urge his advice upon Perses ('noble is he who obeys the one who speaks well', 295). The prophecy of the Iron race's future is the first real indication in the *Works and Days* that the speaker has *privileged* knowledge of the ἐτήτυμα,¹⁶⁸ a sense which underpins all the warnings that follow, for kings and farmers, as well as the practical advice. Shortly before discussion of 'due measures' (starting at v. 694) and the sometimes oracular explanations of 'days from Zeus' (e.g. 742–3, 750), Hesiod calls attention to the question of why anyone should listen to him; he asserts that his connection with the Muses overrides his lack of experience in sailing (648–62) by recalling his sole short voyage to win a poetry competition at Aulis, defined as the place where the

¹⁶⁴ Morrison (2007) 96. ¹⁶⁵ Clay (2009) 72, 88. esp. 26–32.

¹⁶⁶ Zhang (2009). Beall (2004) argues that the second half of the poem offers a different experience of religion from the first half in which Zeus is prominent. Currie (2007) argues from a range of evidence for Hesiod's narrative persona as a 'holy man'.

¹⁶⁷ See Hunter (2014), esp. 26–32; Koning (2010) ch. 5 on ethics, 200–17 on early philosophical receptions of the Dichterweihe in the *Theogony*; I am emphasizing that the *Works and Days* itself is a site in which these strands of authority are self-consciously juxtaposed.

¹⁶⁸ Carrière (1994) 99 notes that the future tenses of *WD* 180–201 imply knowledge of all time.

Muses ‘first set me upon the path of clear-sounding song’ (*WD* 659, recalling *Theogony* 22–34).

Yet *WD* 174–6 are also the lines on which the speaker’s *ethical* authority for the external audience ultimately depends, and paradoxically so, since this is through a contextual *loss* of authority. Hesiod is a believable advocate for justice precisely because his anguish demonstrates that he recognizes and mourns its lack in the Iron Age. This status as an ethical expert emerges together with an emphasis on the speaker himself as a helpless individual within a society whose values he does not share, a paradoxical blend whose receptions in antiquity include, I think, Plato’s constructions of Protagoras and Socrates (see [ch. 3](#)).¹⁶⁹ At least some of the prophecy’s force in its context, indeed, stems from the abruptness with which the speaker shifts from helpless lament to assured prediction; a context which Aratus picks up, as we shall see ([ch. 4](#)). The juxtaposition, or even coexistence, of these tones within the ‘myth of the races’ foreshadows fluctuations in the speaker’s tone that continue throughout the *Works and Days*.¹⁷⁰

Within the ‘myth of the races’, then, is suggested both a divine, would-be protective, foreknowing authority and the voice of an ‘ordinary mortal’ caught up against his will in an evil community. This depiction of a precipitous fall into disaster in the Iron race simultaneously justifies the need for the poem (thus reinforcing the speaker’s licence to instruct and to tell the stories) and envisages its failure, a world in which ‘Hesiod’ is as powerless as was Prometheus to prevent the downfall of *his* brother, and hence the rest of mankind.

This brings us to the third aspect of Hesiod’s voice I wish briefly to note: its shifts between universal and personal application, noted already in terms of the shifts between different addressees ([2.2b](#)). This too emerges vividly through the narrative of races, whose final stage at *WD* 174–201 reinforces the most striking thing about the speaker of the *Works and Days* – the extent to which he, unlike Homer, is a character involved in the precarious world he

¹⁶⁹ On the Aesopic parody of the Hesiodic voice, see Kurke (2011) 204–12.

¹⁷⁰ For an emphasis on the variety within the voice of the narrator in the *Works and Days* by comparison with Homer, see Lamberton (1988) 62, 111 and *passim*. Rand (1911) 163–5 makes pertinent observations on the variety of moods and modes in the poem.

describes.¹⁷¹ It is in the account of the ‘fifth men’ that the dramatic setting for the poem as a whole (the speaker’s dispute with Perses, with bribe-eating kings looking on), is graphically multiplied into a generalization about familial and societal breakdown. Now the speaker is a lone voice in the crowd with something to say to everyone. In contrast with the story’s introduction, directed to a singular unnamed addressee (‘if you like’, 106), the conclusion is emphatically communal, a prediction for ‘mortal human beings’ (201). It prepares for the speaker’s turn to address a different story to the ‘kings’ (202),¹⁷² a story in which his own present-day plight seems inscribed in that of the nightingale.

2.8 Conclusion

This initial investigation of the races narrative in Hesiod’s poem should have made clear the varied potential of his ‘voice’ for different readers within antiquity. Indeed, Hesiodic texture is characterized by a remarkable number of shifts, each of which re-apply or nuance details and draw in other audiences. I have also outlined modern ideas of where the narrative of the races sits within the *Works and Days* and indeed within ‘Hesiod’. The chapter on Aratus will take up both of these questions head-on. More broadly for this study, I am interested in what ancient writers achieved with those intermediate races and small variations when they took the trouble to retell the story in such detail, rather than just emphasizing the opposition of the extremes. I aim to show that responses to Hesiod made issues out of Hesiodic phraseology or details which mean that the races, like the αἶνος, can resonate differently in different contexts. My first case study is Plato, who tested in various ways the applicability of the ‘myth of the races’ to men in the present.

¹⁷¹ For this emphasis, see Osterud (1976) 29.

¹⁷² Of course, in the light of the following meditation on justice and the eye of Zeus, the conclusion to the Pandora story, on the impossibility of evading Zeus, similarly foreshadows this warning.

CHAPTER 3

‘HESIOD’S RACES AND YOUR OWN’: PLATO’S ‘HESIODIC’ PROJECTS

3.1 Introduction: challenging the unimportance of Hesiod

In this chapter I shall work from revisions of Hesiod’s races in Plato to argue that there is a significant and distinctive place for Hesiod in Plato’s project of presenting philosophy.¹ One broader issue and critical frame affected by this study is that of the relationship between Platonic writing and poetry *per se*, a question several times made explicit within the dialogues. Most famously, towards the end of the *Republic*’s extended investigation of justice writ large in the image of a city (‘Kallipolis’²), Socrates reasserts that the greatest Greek poets would have to be banished from such a society, appealing to the existence of ‘an ancient quarrel (διαφορά) between poetry and philosophy’ (*Rep.* 607b6–7). It is now widely suspected that the ‘ancient quarrel’ is a Platonic construct, within his formation of φιλοσοφία as a distinct ‘genre of discourse’,³ and the passage has become the standard point of departure for critical evaluations of the ways in which Plato’s own writing ‘invokes, confronts, and absorbs poetic texts’⁴ both within the *Republic* and in the rest of the Platonic corpus.

Homer, Hesiod and the tragedians are the poets most often named in the dialogues, but most discussions of Plato’s

¹ For a range of questions and some answers regarding Plato’s response to Hesiod more broadly, see now the introduction and the essays in Part 1 of Boys-Stones and Haubold (2010). My contribution to that volume, Van Noorden (2010), was based upon the main section of this chapter, on the *Republic*.

² So named explicitly only at 527c2, in a discussion of geometry, although the label is implied also by 543d1–544a1 when embarking on a discussion of faulty constitutions.

³ So Nightingale (1995) 66–7, arguing for its dialogues with and incorporation of other genres. For a detailed example, see Capra (2001) on Plato’s *Protagoras* and comedy. For the emphasis on Homer see Murray (1996) 21–4. Most (1999) 336–9 finds evidence of that ‘quarrel’ in Xenophanes’ and Heraclitus’ criticisms of Homer and Hesiod, but for Ford (2002) 46–65, Xenophanes as critic marks just ‘one moment in the constant refinement of singing styles that went on in elite symposia’.

⁴ Halliwell (2000) 95, focusing on Plato’s poetic citations.

engagement with poetry⁵ do not give much space to Hesiod. On one level, this is precisely because critics usually begin from that allegation of a 'quarrel', part of a discussion of *mimesis* in *Republic* Book 10 in which Socrates seems to have nothing to say about Hesiod that distinguishes him from Homer, 'leader and teacher of the tragedians' (e.g. *Rep.* 595c1–3).⁶ Insofar as he considers Homer the primary literary threat to the moral integrity of Kallipolis' citizens, Socrates might be thought to echo the judgement of the foolish eponymous rhapsode of the *Ion*: Homer and Hesiod treat the same topics, but Homer does it 'better' (*Ion* 531a–2a). Outside *Republic* 10, however, Socrates' explicit references to poets⁷ often deny them any differentiation in 'poetic' quality. In the *Ion* itself, for example, his resolutely content-based analyses of 'technical' Homeric passages (537ff., including a simile) undermine even the option of evaluating Homer's *mimetic* ('poetic') τέχνη against that of (e.g.) Hesiod.⁸ Nor do the quotations from Homer, Hesiod and tragedy in *Republic* 2 and 3, judged mostly on their ethical content,⁹ admit the possibility of differentiating between these poets in Plato's formation of φιλοσοφία.¹⁰ Discussions of poets in Plato, it might be concluded, offer no real reason to consider Hesiod separately.

Socrates' grouping of Homer, Hesiod and the tragedians at the end of the *Republic* may, however, be disingenuous; at least, it should not be taken on trust without considering whether these poets are targeted and exploited independently at other points in the *Republic*, let alone in other dialogues. This is not to deny that Plato is heir to the early Greek philosophers in viewing Homer and Hesiod jointly as representatives of poetic authority, simultaneously models to be

⁵ Ever-stimulating examples are Murdoch (1977), Janaway (1995) and Burnyeat (1999).

⁶ This still holds: Destrée and Hermann (2011) contains five papers starting from *Republic* 10. One exception is Boys-Stones and Haubold (2010), cited above n. 1.

⁷ Sometimes focusing on poetry itself, sometimes on what poets happen to have said (e.g. *Meno* 95–6).

⁸ On Socrates' 'perverse' treatment of Homer, cf. e.g. Kahn (1993) 375–6. Readers may well think that Socrates' approach here would be better applied to the *Works and Days*' instructions than to Homer.

⁹ The exception is *Rep.* 3.392e–4b, where Socrates rewrites the start of the *Iliad* as pure 'narration' (διήγησις).

¹⁰ In Brandwood (1976), Homer is named over five times as often as Hesiod in the *Republic*, but since 'Homeric' features are not usually at issue, little emerges about Homer in particular.

emulated and rivals to be challenged.¹¹ On the other hand, it is clear from the dialogues that this dual relationship with 'poets' taken collectively does not preclude a marked interest in the Homeric poems and in aspects of their reception among educators, sophists and poets. This appears in several forms in the dialogues. Explicit Homeric criticism frames the *Hippias Minor*, the *Republic* argues both explicitly and implicitly against Achilles as a role-model for young citizens,¹² the openings of the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* write Socrates as Odysseus descending into an underworld, and so on.¹³ Given the range of Plato's engagement with the Homeric poems and with aspects of their cultural significance,¹⁴ it is worth remaining open to the possibility that his engagement with Hesiod is equally subtle and sustained. By reframing the discussion through material found first in Hesiod and not in Homer, this chapter will demonstrate why it is insufficient merely to bracket Hesiod with Homer in his importance for Plato's construction of 'philosophical' discourse in the *Republic* and beyond.

Within the framework of reference to Hesiod, this chapter's argument concerns the *Works and Days* in particular. Judging from the few existing overviews of Plato's response to Hesiod and arguments for extended structural allusions to Hesiodic poems in the Platonic dialogues, it seems fair to say that the narrative epic *Theogony* has attracted a greater range of imaginative scholarly effort on behalf of Plato than has the *Works and Days*;¹⁵ with the exception of the Golden Age theme, the

¹¹ On the 'poetics of early Greek philosophy', see Most (1999).

¹² Cf. Hobbs (2000) chs. 6 and 7.

¹³ For an extreme version of the idea that Plato's dialogues 'refigure' parts of the *Odyssey*, with Socrates as Odysseus, see Planinc (2003) on the *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus* and *Critias*, building on Planinc (1991), in which he argued that the *Laws* complement the *Republic* as the second half of the *Odyssey* complements the first. He emphasizes in Plato reflections of the shamanistic symbolism of the *Odyssey*. His approach provides both a model and a warning; while suggestively viewing aspects of (e.g.) the *Republic* as playful references to the *Odyssey* (waves of argument, *beds* as a 'test' for Glaucon), it also tries to pin down the structure of the texts in a single relation to the Homeric poems. This, I would argue, is un-Platonic.

¹⁴ Nightingale (1995) 92 n. 84 articulates the general point: 'Plato's handling of poetic discourse is hardly homogeneous: different genres of poetry will receive different treatment precisely because they differ as discursive forms and as socio-political practices.'

¹⁵ See Bezantakos and Tsagalis (2006) 395–540 for philosophical readings of the *Theogony*'s preoccupation with 'truth'. Important examples of detailed readings include

Platonic reception of the *Works and Days* is implied or explicitly stated to be primarily through quotations.¹⁶ There are a number of issues to unpack here. On one level, it is a question of critical preference: scholars judging the reception of Hesiod’s poems purely from direct citations of their content rarely (consider how to) take account of other kinds of reference to the same content in its old and new contexts.¹⁷ Yet direct and indirect modes of allusion to a predecessor are not mutually exclusive, as discussions of the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* will emphasize in this chapter.

It may be, too, that the use of Plato’s attitude to ‘poetry’ as the context of discussion, where *Theogony* is to the fore,¹⁸ has obscured the broader potential of the *Works and Days* as a model for Platonic argumentation. It is, as Andrew Ford acknowledges, harder to differentiate between the discourses of the *Theogony* and of Homeric hexameters¹⁹ than between Homer and the *Works and Days*, with its contemporary orientation. Whereas the *Theogony*, like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is concerned with a world remote from the present audience, the speaker of the *Works and Days*, like Plato’s protagonists, addresses the urgent question of how to live in the world now. The claim to poetic authority is common to both Hesiodic poems, but the practical assumption of a didactic role, the construction of an argument targeted (ostensibly) to a particular occasion and audience, is unique to the *Works and Days*. Appropriating Homer and/or the *Theogony* may be a bigger challenge for Plato, but given the ethical agenda he shares with Hesiod it would surely not be surprising if Plato’s use of the *Works and*

Too (1998) chs. 1–2 on how echoes of Typhoeus resonate in the *Republic*’s concern with ordered and disordered speech, and Pender (2010) on how the genealogies of the *Theogony* are systematically reconstructed in the cosmology of the *Timaeus*.

¹⁶ Explicitly: Ford (2010) 152 cautions against the application of twentieth-century hermeneutic reading practices to Plato’s use of Hesiod, since for Plato’s contemporary readers, ‘Hesiod’s *Works and Days* was usually encountered in pre-selected, often pre-interpreted excerpts.’

¹⁷ Koning (2010) 22 acknowledges the limitations of this method.

¹⁸ Themes of the *Theogony* are to the fore when Socrates describes poetic activity in the *Republic*, referring to the creation of stories such as the Gigantomachy in using the terms μυθολογεῖν (378c4, e3, 379a2, 380c2) or λογοποιεῖν (378d2) to describe what ‘poets’ do.

¹⁹ Ford (2010) 136. Ledbetter (2003) ch. 2 does distinguish the ‘supernaturalist’ poetics of the Homeric poems from the ‘naturalist’ relation of the Hesiodic poet to his Muses in the *Theogony*, but has to argue against the presumption (e.g. by Griffith (1983)) that the narrative personae are essentially the same.

Days too extended beyond the citation of apophthegms,²⁰ almost without context,²¹ for which Hesiodic authority is interchangeable with that of Homer.

A third consideration, implied in these two, is the extent to which modern caricatures of the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* have pre-judged the forms of their reception(s) in Plato. There is plenty of material on Hesiod with or opposed to Homer, but we lack explicit contemporary distinctions between Hesiodic poems²² that would warrant presumptions of different treatment in Plato.²³ Existing scholarship on material common to both poems, such as the Prometheus-Pandora story, usually (and sensibly) treats the material as a unity.²⁴ Of course, reference simply to ideas which had already been turned into clichés, such as the theme of the 'life under Cronus' taken up by the comic poets,²⁵ will most likely transcend reference to particular prior narrative contexts, but it seems from recent analyses of Hesiodic reminiscences in Plato that elements from across the Hesiodic corpus are interwoven in the *Republic* and *Timaeus*, at least.²⁶ By re-approaching discussion of Plato and Hesiod through reflections of the metallic races, found in Hesiod only in the *Works and Days*, one implication of the current study is an invitation to review preconceptions about Plato's use of material from different Hesiodic poems. Key to my sense of what Plato takes from Hesiod is a speaker who brings together multiple discursive modes and perspectives in persuading diverse audiences towards the upright life.

²⁰ For such citation of Hesiod in the orators alongside Plato, see Graziosi (2010).

²¹ Cf. Halliwell (2000) 103: *some* poetic context, such as the epic character speaking, is taken into account. For the assumption in Plato that entire passages can be recalled through quotation, see Halliwell (2000) 96; highlighting the extensive memorization of poetry in education, he points out that the cultural milieu depicted in Plato's dialogues is one in which all participants, especially Socrates, are, and expect each other to be, well versed in many authors and genres.

²² Pace Ford (2010) 139 on the *Works and Days* as 'in Greek terms, a fundamentally different kind of song', evidence of how these poems were characterized stylistically in antiquity is both too general and too late to be a reliable guide to Plato's hermeneutic practice – see Hunter (2009).

²³ Although Most (2010) argues that works acknowledged by all to be genuine Plato refer to *Theogony* and *Works and Days* only, Capra (2010) argues that *Timaeus-Critias* evokes *Theogony-Catalogue*.

²⁴ So Kanaan (2010) on the *Symposium* and Miller (1978) on the *Protagoras*.

²⁵ On this theme, see first Baldry (1953). ²⁶ See e.g. Regali (2010) on the *Timaeus*.

To introduce my argument, I shall use the *Protagoras*, a sort of cross-section of the use of Hesiod in Plato, and not only because it contains both specific citation of Hesiodic verses (*WD* 289–92 at *Prt.* 340d) and extended transformations of Hesiodic themes. For the purposes of this chapter, the important point to be taken from this dialogue is that Platonic characters pick up and respond to ‘Hesiod’ at different levels.²⁷ The dialogue’s framing question is whether virtue can be taught, and, in order to claim that it can, the eponymous sophist describes political virtue as an art in which all citizens are experts. He asserts this self-consciously through a ‘myth’ (μῦθος) followed up by an argument (λόγος – 320c) which recalls and recombines elements from throughout the *Works and Days*’ ‘meditation on justice’²⁸ and work. Both the moral that Protagoras draws from his narrative and his didactic authority, however, are directly challenged by Socrates, whose actions in the dialogue reveal the limitations of a focus on interpreting hypothetical speakers. Socrates’ final speech in the dialogue confirms a reading of his approach to the conversation as a more subtle and educationally productive mode of appropriating Hesiod.

I shall then develop my observation, illustrated first by the *Protagoras*, that whenever speakers in Plato re-shape, re-frame or interpret Hesiodic myths so as to yield a moral, their presentations are questioned, criticized or otherwise revised within the texts. The major part of the chapter will show how this applies to Socrates’ own procedure in the *Republic*, a dialogue I find particularly close to the *Works and Days* in its framing project of an exhortation to justice, aimed at those who threaten to become unjust.²⁹ In his approach towards Glaucon and Adeimantus, I shall argue, Socrates is made to ‘play Hesiod’, a role flagged by his multiple

²⁷ Compare Sedley (2006) on how, in the *Symposium*, Agathon’s criticism of the genealogies of Hesiod and Parmenides nuances that of Phaedrus in their respective speeches about Love.

²⁸ For the phrase, cf. Boys-Stones (2010) 41, but for him the model extends only as far as *WD* 105, whereas I think Protagoras aims to collapse the whole of Hesiod’s message into his speech.

²⁹ The ancient subtitle of the *Republic*, *On Justice*, found in a number of MSS, derives perhaps from Thrasyllus (died c. 36 CE), organizer of the Platonic corpus. The title Πολιτεία comes from Aristotle.

interpretations of Hesiod's races. The 'noble lie'³⁰ of common earth-born origin and metallic hierarchy, which Socrates constructs for the citizens of Kallipolis at *Republic* 3.414b–5c, has been much studied in other contexts,³¹ but its role in flagging Plato's response to Hesiod depends on reading this passage in conjunction with *Republic* 8.³² Here, the Muses explain to Socrates that civil war will arise in Kallipolis once the metallic types, here confirmed as 'Hesiod's races' (τὰ Ἡσιόδου . . . γένη 547a1), become mixed. Socrates then sketches out four 'diseased' constitutions as hypothetical stages in a continuous decline. Here too his descriptions recall details of Hesiod's five-stage narrative. I shall demonstrate that in blending the languages of social functions, constitutions and psychological characters, Plato's Socrates brings out connections between images employed already in Hesiod's multifaceted ethical argument. The methodological significance of this reconstruction of 'Hesiod', however, lies in the fact that these different 'readings' emerge sequentially, in response to repeated challenges from Socrates' interlocutors.

The transformation of Hesiod's races in Plato to flag extensive structural explorations and appropriations of Hesiodic pedagogy is, however, confined neither to Socrates nor to ethical projects that so obviously echo that of the *Works and Days*. In section 3.4, I shall examine the self-consciously bizarre revision of Hesiod's metallic narrative in the *Statesman*, an explicitly self-correcting discussion of statesmanship, third in a series in which the discussions of the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* are dramatically situated first and second. At *Statesman* 268d5, having attempted to identify the 'herd' over which the Statesman rules through systematic subdivision of mortal creatures, the Elean Stranger,³³ who was first introduced to

³⁰ On translations of γεννοῖον ψευδομένους (*Rep.* 414b8–c1) cf. Dombrowski (1997) 566. Hyland (1988) 250 notes that, termed a 'lie', this myth is distinct from other 'presented myths' in Plato.

³¹ Sample foci in discussions of the 'noble lie' are Williamson (1978) on social hierarchy, Zembarty (1988) on lying and Greek morality, Gill (1993) 53–66 on Plato and falsehood.

³² Among critics of the 'noble lie', *Republic* 8 is ignored by (e.g.) Hall (1967), Andrew (1989) and even Hartman (1988) who addresses its response to Hesiod. Solmsen (1962) 182–3 declares: 'A reference to the myth of generations in *Republic* VIII adds no new elements of meaning.'

³³ He is traditionally termed the 'Eleatic' Stranger or Visitor (ξένος), but is introduced simply as ἐξ Ἑλέας (*Sophist* 216a3), which does not in itself imply that he subscribes (only) to the Eleatic school of philosophy, although introduced as 'a companion in the crowd around

take over the discussion in the *Sophist*, tries presenting their results by a different route, telling his new interlocutor Young Socrates a story of cosmic reversal. At one time ‘the god’ (ὁ θεός 269c4) steers the universe; at other times he ‘lets it go’ (ἀνῆκεν 269c5) and of its own accord it revolves in the opposite direction, and men must look after their own needs. After many more details, it emerges from this outsize illustration that statesmanship needs more precise definition to distinguish it from other kinds of ‘care’ of a herd, and the discussion continues with more explicit attention to pedagogical method. Memorable features of Hesiod’s races are evoked in the narrative of an alternate world, but their didactic significance for Plato is not immediately clear. Emphasizing the interplay in the *Statesman* between the myth and its frame, two different modes of argument, I shall argue that the combination brings out Hesiodic themes as subjects for philosophical inquiry – in particular, the nature of the human γένος, the relationship between past and present, and the mechanics of decline. The importance of these ideas in the later reception of Hesiod’s ‘myth of the races’ will emerge from the chapters on Latin literature.

I shall conclude by drawing together from my three case studies broader strands of thought about the role occupied by Hesiodic didactic within Plato’s project, such as the figure of the speaker and the way in which he characterizes his utterance. In focusing on the form and framing of the Hesiodic material in Plato as much as the content, I want to highlight the *spectrum* of rewritings of the metallic story across the Platonic corpus. I shall suggest that this myth functions in Plato as a kind of shorthand for an aspect of Hesiodic poetry that Plato re-casts as incipiently ‘philosophical’: examination, repeated from different angles, of the forces that govern human life.³⁴ It is for the way in which his repeated engagement with the races narrative opens up such threads of potential in

Parmenides and Zeno’ (*Sophist* 216a). Section 3.4 below makes more of the non-Eleatic echoes in his myth in the *Statesman*. His status as a foreigner is emphasized at 294d; I have followed Zuckert (2009) who at 680 n. 1 defends her translation of ξένος as ‘stranger’ rather than (with e.g. Rowe (1995)) as ‘visitor’. Her motive is to emphasize the difference from Socrates as citizen of Athens; I aim rather to convey the element of ‘outsider’ in the Hesiodic voice, which I shall argue can be found in both these Platonic characters.

³⁴ On the Platonic corpus of dialogues as refocusing attention on important points, cf. K. Morgan (2004) 369.

Hesiod that Plato holds a particularly important place in the wider view of Hesiod's reception sketched in this book.

One cautionary note before I turn to look more closely at the *Protagoras*. Plato's interest in Hesiod's metallic narrative certainly extends beyond the three dialogues whose study takes up most of this chapter. For example, *Works and Days* 122–3, on the post-mortem state of the Golden race as δαίμονες, is cited and reinterpreted synchronically not only at *Republic* 5.468e5–69a3, discussed below (it will be believed that *any* of the guardians of Kallipolis who die particularly courageous deaths become δαίμονες), but also, in a slightly different form, as part of a citation of *WD* 121–3 at *Cratylus* 397e5–98b, as an etymological indicator about the word δαίμων: 'good' men are those who are 'wise and knowing' (δαήμονες). The *Cratylus* quotation, like other explicit citations of Hesiod in Plato, indicates that Plato was ready to engage (repeatedly) with Hesiod as a source both of words and of concepts. However, in the atomizing critical context of the *Cratylus*, Plato's selection and adaptation of these lines³⁵ is better understood within a tradition of debate about Hesiod's δαίμονες than as evidence of Plato's interest in the whole 'myth of the races' in its Hesiodic context.³⁶ Therefore, the *Cratylus* is only a supporting text in this chapter's account of how Plato refers to Hesiod as 'philosophical'.

A further set of passages not treated here, although important for a complete understanding of Plato as a creative reader of Hesiod, are those in which Hesiod's races narrative appears to be a more distant reference point within broader Platonic meditations on the development of social and political culture. One such sequence is the story of Atlantis, attributed to Solon in the *Timaeus* (23c–5d) and *Critias*. The flourishing and destruction by flood of this larger-than-life city, ancient enemy of ancient Athens, illustrates a cosmic perspective on the human race, such that the current race of Greeks,

³⁵ Pace West (1978) 181–2 arguing that Plato's memory of the text differs from our MSS, Koning (2010) 147–8 n. 91 argues for Plato's deliberate selection or adaptation of Hesiod's phrase in the contexts of the *Republic* and *Cratylus*. On *Republic* 5, see also my section 3.3c.ii below.

³⁶ Similarly, the 'Dämonisierungstopos', as Gatz (1967) 56–7 terms it, is present also in the image of the life under Cronus in *Laws* 4.713c–e, but without explicit reference to Hesiod. Heraclitus and Empedocles are important predecessors to Plato on this front. On Heraclitus, see Guthrie (1962) 483; on Empedocles, Koning (2010) 165–9.

whose cultural memory has been successively wiped out by disasters, are considered by the Egyptians to be mere ‘children’. A second sequence is that of *Laws* 3.677a–82e, which outlines the early history of human society, making reference to the fabled life of the Cyclopes, and a little later (4.713b–4a) argues that we should imitate the life under Cronus, which existed long before that first formation of states.³⁷

Several of these passages have been reviewed together in studies of Greek or Platonic thought about the Golden Age tradition,³⁸ and at least two attempts have been made to map Platonic references to Hesiod’s races onto a single, coherent or developing Platonic view about the state of mankind.³⁹ The complexity of the responses in the *Republic* and the *Statesman*, however, is not highlighted in such surveys because, as I shall argue, it points in a different direction. I shall emphasize, among other observations, that these rewritings are plural, offering synchronic as well as diachronic interpretations, and as such they function as clues to a wider process in Plato of unpacking, questioning and experimenting with Hesiodic constructions of the world. Through study of the *Republic*, in particular, I aim to show that the ‘myth of the races’ is for Plato not one of the free-floating pieces of poetic lore that just happen to come from Hesiod.⁴⁰ Rather, references to the metallic narrative occur in contexts that recall its immediate and wider frames in the *Works and Days* and in turn mark broader structural and thematic engagements with this poem in Plato’s dialogues.⁴¹

³⁷ Lovejoy and Boas (1935) 162–3 emphasize the influence of *Laws* 3 on subsequent ideas of primitivism. Nightingale (1999) highlights its echoes in the cosmology of *Laws* 10. On *Laws* 4, see Van Harten (2003).

³⁸ Havelock (1957) ch. 2, Gatz (1967) 54–8, Kubusch (1986) 36ff., Dillon (1992) 30, Schofield (2006) 203–12.

³⁹ The first, rather strained example is Cornford (1903), who connects the accounts of spirits and the Golden Age in the *Republic*, *Phaedrus* and *Statesman* in reading the ‘noble lie’ with the allegory of the Cave as Plato’s interpretation of the Bronze men who in Hesiod go down to Hades. Solmsen (1962) argues that the rule of *daemones* in the *Statesman* ‘evolves’ into the divine *politeia* of *Laws* 4.

⁴⁰ In the *Statesman* (269b7–8), the ‘age of Cronus’ is one of the stories said to be circulating detached from its original source – see section 3.4a below.

⁴¹ Similar cases have been made with other authors in view: Segvic (2009) 29 argues that citations from Homer in the *Protagoras* ‘serve as external markers of a deeper symbolic engagement with the epic text’. Equally, Capra (2001) reads the *Protagoras* as an extended twist on the sophistic image of Socrates in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*.

My current focus on the potential of Hesiod's races for Platonic meditations on didactic method is implied by the choice to set the scene through the *Protagoras*, whose mythical reconfigurations of Hesiod early on in the dialogue are explicit and open to challenge, rather than through (e.g.) the *Gorgias*, whose mythical epilogue (522e–6d) more subtly combines echoes of Hesiod's stories of Prometheus and the human races.⁴² In any case, both for Plato's use of Hesiod and for our understanding of it, revisions of the races mark the tip of the iceberg.

3.2 Didactic (re)constructions: the *Protagoras*

Protagoras' 'Great Speech', effectively a display of his prowess before a crowd of sophists, Socrates and the young Hippocrates (a potential pupil), sets out to demonstrate that virtue is teachable. Protagoras has already declared (at 316d3–317b6) that as a sophist he is merely doing openly what 'Homer, Hesiod and Simonides' and other artists did in disguise.⁴³ It is not surprising that, when the choice of argumentative mode is left up to him, he opts for a μῦθος rather than a λόγος, ostensibly because it is 'more pleasant' (χαριέστερον 320c6). In fact, the story functions to *assert* what Protagoras cannot otherwise account for, the general possession of virtue, as an answer to Socrates' question why the Athenians trust any citizen, trained or not, to give advice on city-management.⁴⁴ Protagoras brings out the aetiological point in commentary (322d), but flags his shift back to argument only for his answer to Socrates' second challenge, to explain why the wisest citizens cannot transmit virtue to their sons (324d5–8d2).

In Protagoras' myth, the gods moulded mortal races (θνητὰ γένη 320d) out of earth and fire, then instructed Prometheus and Epimetheus to equip all the species with their powers (δυνάμεις). Epimetheus, surprisingly, begged to take the initiative in this task. He used up all the powers on the 'non-rational' creatures (ἄλογα 321c1), leaving man unprotected. Prometheus, arriving as agreed

⁴² See Hunter (2012) 120 n. 31.

⁴³ On the sophists' self-definition as heirs to a long tradition, see Trapp (1987) 41–4.

⁴⁴ Morgan (2000) 139. Compare Socrates' use of a 'noble lie' in *Republic* Book 3.

to inspect the distribution, therefore stole for mankind fire and ‘technical knowledge’ from Hephaestus and Athena, mankind’s resources for life (εὐπορία ... ἀνθρώπων τοῦ βίου 322a1). Yet, banding together for protection against the beasts, they tended to wrong each other (ἡδίκουν ἀλλήλους) and failed to maintain their communities through lack of ‘the civic art’ (πολιτικὴν τέχνην 322c1). So Zeus instructed Hermes to distribute αἰδώς and δίκη, ‘shame’ and ‘justice’, among all men (322c1–d5).⁴⁵

In outline, Protagoras’ account approximates to *Works and Days* 47–201, in which the story of Prometheus’ theft preceded the story of mortal γένη who descended into mutual destruction. Yet in detail, much has been altered; the re-use of Hesiodic characters and events⁴⁶ serves to call attention to differences such as the expanded role of Epimetheus (on which more below) and ways in which elements of both Hesiod’s Prometheus stories and the myth of the races have been intertwined and refocused towards an optimistic aetiological goal. The initial helplessness of mankind is the cause of Prometheus’ theft rather than part of Zeus’s retribution for that theft (a change resulting in some logical incoherence).⁴⁷ Their subsequent history according to Protagoras speeds through several Hesiodic races; first emphasized is mortal kinship with the gods (*Prt.* 322a – cf. *WD* 108), and the attempts of humans, initially dwelling apart from each other (cf. *WD* 131),⁴⁸ to live in a community collapse into mutual injustice (cf. *WD* 134–5) and repeated destruction, until we reach the gift that Hermes conveys to mankind from Zeus: no longer Pandora, but δίκη and αἰδώς, qualities endangered in the Hesiodic Iron Age (*WD* 192–3, 197–200). Material from the conclusions of Hesiod’s two myths has been combined so as to overturn the Hesiodic emphasis on current misery.

⁴⁵ On Protagoras’ identification of these qualities as political expertise, see Taylor (1991) 79–83.

⁴⁶ The most detailed list of similarities between Protagoras’ myth and Hesiod’s two-part account of human history is to be found in Koning (2010) 219 n. 125.

⁴⁷ Protagoras’ story plays down the enmity found in Hesiod between Zeus and Prometheus, as Miller (1978) 23 notes; Zeus too does not want humanity obliterated, with the result that Prometheus’ need to *steal* fire and his being punished for the theft (322a) go unexplained. On other contradictions within Protagoras’ story, such as the impression of a pre-existing ‘rational’ human race at 321c1, see Nussbaum (1986) 100–1 and Sihvola (1989).

⁴⁸ For Beresford (2013), this history points to Democritus.

In Hesiod, as I noted in [ch. 2](#), no explicit moral is drawn from the 'myth of the races' in isolation; the implications of the narrative for Hesiod's addressees emerge from the ways in which it is embedded in the larger discourse of the *Works and Days*. Likewise, the history of mankind resulting from Protagoras' recombination of Hesiodic elements needs to be reinforced by λόγος (cf. *Prt.* 324d6–7) within a larger assertion that 'everyone has political virtue' (*Prt.* 322d–323a). It has gone unremarked in the secondary literature that what Protagoras takes from Hesiod is not limited to Hesiod's own past-tense narratives and does not stop at the end of Protagoras' μῦθος; the following commentary and λόγος in reply to Socrates' second challenge has several points of contact with themes from Hesiod's extended 'meditation on justice'. Most importantly, Protagoras' emphasis on Zeus's gift of justice as key to what it is to be human (εἶναι ἐν ἀνθρώποις 323c) picks up Hesiod's conclusion for Perses (*WD* 276–80) on the difference between humans and other animals: 'to human beings [Zeus] has given Justice'. Again, the notion, in Zeus's speech to Hermes, of a shameless or unjust individual as comparable to a disease for a city (*Prt.* 322d6), picks up the first point emphasized in Hesiod's image of the Unjust City, that the whole community suffers for one man who sins (*WD* 240–1). Finally, when Protagoras turns to answer Socrates' examples of just men apparently unable to teach justice to their sons, Protagoras' answer that they do, and that at present the most unjust man reared among humans ruled by law is a 'craftsman of justice' compared with those lacking education and lawcourts (*Prt.* 327c5–d2) could be viewed as a sophistic version of Hesiod's bitter wish 'right now, may neither I nor my son be just among humans . . . if the unjust man shall have greater justice' (*WD* 270–2).

Identifying such transformations of Hesiodic ideas enables us to see how Protagoras' moralizing interpretation of myths from within Hesiod's text works to renew the larger 'Hesiodic' project. Protagoras concludes: 'so much by way of story and argument, to show that excellence can be taught' (*Prt.* 328c3–4, trans. Taylor: τοιοῦτον σοι . . . καὶ μῦθον καὶ λόγον εἶρηκα, ὥς διδασκὼν ἀρετή). His speech presents itself as another *Works and Days*, both in its mixture of μῦθος and λόγος and in revealing the path to

virtue.⁴⁹ This is apt, since Protagoras’ speech functions as part of his own immediate, self-consciously meta-didactic purpose of becoming Hippocrates’ teacher. Protagoras has already introduced himself as Hesiod’s heir; with this speech, he self-consciously updates ‘Hesiodic’ material in order to acquire in practice the authority he rhetorically claims.

Later on in the dialogue, however, Socrates overturns not only the moral contrived from Protagoras’ engagement with Hesiod, that virtue can be taught (329b5–61b7), but also, by illustrating the limitations of poetry as the main focus of attention,⁵⁰ the value of Protagoras’ kind of claim to Hesiodic authority. This is not the place for analysis of the debate between Socrates and Protagoras on the interpretation of Simonides’ ‘Scopas Ode’ (338e–48a), the longest discussion of a single poetic text in Plato.⁵¹ In the light of the sophist’s ‘Hesiodic’ pretensions, however, its conclusion is worth re-emphasizing here, before it is expanded in my analysis of the *Republic*. Socrates concludes the debate over Simonides, to which he has been challenged by Protagoras, by stating that since ‘one cannot question them about what they say’, a gathering of men such as ‘most of us claim to be’ should not admit ‘extraneous voices, not even the voices of poets’ (ἄλλοτρίας φωνῆς οὐδὲ ποιητῶν 347e3)⁵² when they could be conversing directly with each other. Socrates here, as in several other dialogues, distrusts deference to external or absent authorities.⁵³ The point is not, however, to forbid the illustrative or instrumental adaptation of

⁴⁹ Cf. Hunter (2014) 267–9. Socrates himself, at 340d1–5, cites Hesiod as an authority on this point (*WD* 289–92).

⁵⁰ Debate continues about how seriously we are to take Socrates’ reading of Simonides. See especially Carson (1992) and Ledbetter (2003) ch. 5.

⁵¹ Stimulating readings of the confrontation include Scodel (1986), Trapp (1987) and Schofield (1992). For the reconstructed text of Simonides’ poem, see Beresford (2008).

⁵² Either simply because the poet himself is absent, as Ferrari (1989) 100–3 argues, or more pointedly because Socrates tends to doubt that poets have the authority to interpret their own poetry, as Ledbetter (2003) chs. 4 and 5 argues with reference to the *Apology*.

⁵³ Griswold (1999) 291. Compare how Socrates discourages Meno from relying on what he learnt from Gorgias – ‘Let us leave Gorgias out of it, since he is not here’ – and asks Meno for ‘what you yourself say that virtue is’ (*Meno* 71d). However, Scodel (1986) 26 notes that in *Hippias Minor* 365c–d, Homer’s meaning is assumed to be unrecoverable but Hippias is permitted to ‘speak for’ both Homer and himself, because he believes in the truth of what he ascribes to Homer. The key concern is, as Socrates makes clear to Protagoras, that the argument is one in which the participants are genuinely invested: ‘it’s you and me I want to cross-examine’ (331c5–d).

ideas expressed in poetic texts. Socrates is not advocating a ban on poetic quotation (indeed, he cites Homer almost immediately afterwards, at 348d1), but is concerned rather to caution against *replacing* philosophical discussion with literary criticism.

Still, one might expect from this that (Plato's) Socrates' own use of poetic models would be severely circumscribed. Indeed, Stephen Halliwell, in his work on poetic citation in Plato, finds in the dialogues

a constant interplay between Plato's willingness to reflect and even perpetuate, with modifications, the traditional power of poetic authority, and his need to submit this authority – by a whole repertoire of dramatic, linguistic, and conceptual means – to the standards of discourse and reason embodied in, and advocated by, his own philosophical writing.

Socrates' apparent rejection of poetic voices in the *Protagoras* is interpreted by Halliwell as an example of this 'subjection of muthos to logos'.⁵⁴ Yet a glance at the end of the *Protagoras* suggests that for Socrates, this process leaves room not only for explicit, isolated poetic citations but also for extended *structural* engagements with poets and even poetic characters, as long as these do not make the poetry the ultimate object of questioning. Socrates in conclusion approves Prometheus as a model for his own life:

I wish that, now we have gone through all this, we could also arrive at a consideration of what excellence is and then investigate again (πάλιν ἐπισκέψασθαι 361c5–6) whether it can be taught or not, so that Epimetheus doesn't go on deceiving and tripping us up even in our investigation (καὶ ἐν τῇ σκέψει) – the same way that, in your story, he neglected us in his distribution. I liked Prometheus more than Epimetheus in the myth, too. I take pains with all these matters because I use him as my example (ὃν χρῶμενος ἐγώ), and exercise forethought (προμηθεύμενος) for my life as a whole.⁵⁵ (*Protagoras* 361c4–d5, trans. Taylor)

As others have noted, this appropriation of Prometheus caps a latent struggle for initiative between Socrates and Protagoras. The unprecedented switching of roles for Prometheus and Epimetheus

⁵⁴ Halliwell (2000) 109, having discussed the *Protagoras* at 104–7.

⁵⁵ Cf. Socrates' 'forethought' also at *Crito* 45a4, *Grg.* 501b4, *Rep.* 441e5. On his use of Prometheus in *Philebus* 16–17, see Morgan (2000) 247–8.

in Protagoras’ tale ‘sets the limits in myth for what to expect from the meeting of Protagoras and Socrates’ (that is, they end up reversing their initial positions on whether virtue can be taught).⁵⁶ Certainly Socrates’ closing move is anticipated in Protagoras’ sardonic first words to him: ‘You do right, Socrates, to exercise forethought on my behalf’ (προμηθῆ ... ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ 316c5). Socrates is as ready to make use of poetry as his opponent,⁵⁷ but unlike the pretensions of Protagoras, whose Hesiodic Great Speech is part of his claim to be able to teach youths how to be ‘most powerful’ (δυνατώτατος 319a) in politics, those of Socrates are in the service of *self*-education.

Such argumentative application of a mythical role may be seen as an extension of Hesiod’s own implicit adoption in the *Works and Days* of the role of Prometheus, likewise warning his foolish brother. Socrates’ appropriation of Prometheus at the end of the *Protagoras*, however, goes beyond the images in Hesiod and even beyond the Prometheus of Protagoras’ myth; his wish to keep re-investigating (361c6, recalling Epimetheus’ request to Prometheus at 320d7 to ‘inspect’ (ἐπίσκειψαι) his distribution) grants methodological value also to ‘afterthought’ in a positive sense.⁵⁸ A closer focus on the roles of ‘Forethought’ and ‘Afterthought’ in making humans what they are now was prompted initially by the reversal of the brothers’ positions in the myth, and the omission of Pandora;⁵⁹ then Socrates’ insistence on some question-and-answer in this dialogue emphasized that true education does not consist merely of speeches thought out in advance, but a willingness to re-inspect the answers.

Recent commentators have emphasized that Socrates’ ‘victory’ over Protagoras in this dialogue, and more broadly his difference

⁵⁶ Miller (1978) 23–9, followed up by Morgan (2000) 147–53.

⁵⁷ Besides Socrates’ surprising command of the Simonides poem and willingness to cite Hesiod and Homer, witness the extensive use of the *Odyssey* in the frame of the dialogue, narrated by Socrates himself.

⁵⁸ Morgan (2000) 150–3. She follows Miller (1978) in the belief that [Aeschylus] in *Prometheus Bound* anticipated Plato’s idea of subsuming the role of Epimetheus in Prometheus [but *versus* Zeus]. The dating of this play relative to Plato’s *Protagoras* is not known.

⁵⁹ The adornment of Pandora may be recalled in Epimetheus’ ‘clothing’ of the various animals: e.g. ἐκόσμη (320e1) and προσήπτεν (320d8) pick up how Athena κόσμησε (*WD* 72) and ἐφάρμοσε (76).

from the sophists, is not easy to pin down.⁶⁰ I have argued that the distinction may be tracked in the *Protagoras* through their different approaches to Hesiod. Unlike Protagoras' more crude interpretation and appropriation of Hesiodic authority, Socrates seems to be advocating the use of mythology as inspiration or springboard for a more independent, self-oriented application and re-application of its lessons. Indeed, Socrates' idea of a Prometheus productive for life may be considered an analogy for the structuring (i.e. not merely ornamental) role of poetry in a Platonic dialogue, in that it helps to provoke reflection on the topic at hand.

I am not the first to note that Socrates' 'Promethean' resolution in the *Protagoras* may orient us towards the potential for Plato's own creative engagement with poetry within his dialogues, but while others have been pointed towards the use of myth,⁶¹ my aim is to demonstrate the importance of *Hesiod* for Plato. For this I shall turn first to the *Republic*, a dialogue narrated entirely by Socrates, to reveal the extent to which Socrates here constructs Hesiod as a predecessor in argumentation. Socrates' position as 'Hesiod' does not go unchallenged by his interlocutors, but I shall argue that the 'Hesiodic' qualities of the *Republic* as a whole not only survive but thrive on the need to respond to those challenges. The third main section, on the *Statesman*, will substantiate the point about Plato's project as 'Hesiodic', which demands evidence from more than one dialogue and from primary speakers other than Socrates.

As Socrates in the *Protagoras* and elsewhere makes clear, a definitive answer to the question of what poets (or any authority not present) 'meant' to say is not needed for the process of dialectical inquiry and is not its proper object. In the case of what the races in Hesiod 'mean', the *Republic* brings out several 'explanations', as we shall see. I shall show that Socrates in Books 3, 5 and 8, viewed as reading and rereading the role of this narrative in the *Works and Days* with different emphases to different ends, not only appropriates Hesiod as a model of 'philosophical' exhortation towards justice, but constructs the very recommendation of

⁶⁰ McCoy (2008). Cf. e.g. Zuckert (2009) ch. 9 on the Elean Stranger's implicit accusation that Socrates is a sophist.

⁶¹ Morgan (2000) 154.

philosophy (in the form of sorting out one’s internal polity) as a Hesiodic goal.

3.3 Socrates’ ‘Hesiodic’ project: the *Republic*

For the *Republic*, in particular, the idea of the primary speaker’s ‘playing Hesiod’ is not an obvious thesis, since Socrates in this dialogue is set the challenge of proving the value of justice but without mentioning its material rewards, *unlike* Hesiod, Homer and other poets (2.363a–7e). Yet as I shall show (section 3.3a), Hesiod’s poetry in particular is recalled when his narrative of races is appropriated for Socrates’ ‘noble lie’, a charter myth for the citizens of Kallipolis (*Republic* 3.414–15). The connection is acknowledged in *Republic* 8, in the Muses’ enigmatic discourse on that city’s inevitable decline. Continuing the Muses’ narrative in political terms, Socrates’ analysis of the imperfect constitutions, which has been maligned by readers since Aristotle,⁶² deserves more consideration in relation to the ‘noble lie’.⁶³ From attention to the framing and emphases of both passages, I shall show how Socrates directs towards Glaucon and Adeimantus the urgency of Hesiod’s wider ethical exhortation (section 3.3b) and his warning that personal choices help to create just or unjust societies (section 3.3c). With this in view, I shall reconsider ‘Hesiodic’ and ‘anti-Hesiodic’ points about Socrates’ multifaceted argument for justice here and elsewhere in the *Republic* (section 3.3d). Finally, his use of inscrutable Muses highlights the self-consciousness about the possibility of reaching the truth which, I shall reiterate, distinguishes Socrates’ appropriation of Hesiod from that of Protagoras (section 3.3e).

3.3a Socrates’ case for justice: a ‘Hesiodic’ project?

The basic task that aligns Socrates in the *Republic* with ‘Hesiod’ in the *Works and Days* is that of persuading certain individuals, who are inclining towards injustice, to choose to be just. However one

⁶² Cf. *Politics* 1316a1–b2; Annas (1981) 294 judges *Republic* 8–9 ‘both confusing and confused’.

⁶³ Rarely treated together; one exception is Hitz (2010).

reconstructs the situation behind the *Works and Days* (p. 56 above), it is clear that the speaker is concerned to warn Perses away from 'gift-eating' kings who, if they are not actively abusing their status, at least 'do not know how much more the half is than the whole' (*WD* 40). The discourse on justice is applied also to the kings (e.g. *WD* 248–9). Compare the danger motivating Socrates in the *Republic*: Glaucon and Adeimantus in *Republic* Book 2 demand to know why they should not aim merely for the appearance of justice, and practise injustice in secret (ἀδίκον ὄντα λανθάνειν 367c2).

In response to this challenge, Socrates proposes to work by analogy, from a larger image to the smaller, so embarks on the theoretical foundation of a city (369a1) in order to see where justice and injustice come to be in it. Having outlined the Just City and its counterpart, the man in whose soul every part does its own work (443b), he then has to pause to defend controversial aspects of his vision (the common possession of wives and children). Not until *Republic* 8 does the framing project come back into view; Socrates explicitly aims to identify and contrast the most just and the most unjust constitutions to determine which corresponding individual would be happier ('whether the best is happiest and the worst most wretched or whether it's otherwise' 544a6–7), in order to know whether to practise injustice or justice (545b1–2).

As an argumentative strategy with which to urge a moral choice for individuals, images of utopian and dystopian cities appear first in the *Works and Days* (225–37 and 238–47) pointedly juxtaposed:

οἱ δὲ δίκας ξείνοισι καὶ ἐνδήμοισι διδοῦσιν
 ἰθείας καὶ μὴ τι παρεκβαίνουσι δικαίου,
 τοῖσι τέθλη πόλις, λαοὶ δ' ἀνθεῦσιν ἐν αὐτῇ: . . .

οἷς δ' ὕβρις τε μέγ' ἔλε κακῇ καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα,
 τοῖς δὲ δίκην Κρονίδης τεκμαίρεται εὐρύσσοι Ζεὺς.
 πολλὰ καὶ ξύμπασα πόλις κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀπηύρα,
 ὅστις ἀλιτράνῃ καὶ ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάσται.

Those who give straight judgments to foreigners and fellow-citizens and do not turn aside from justice at all, their city blooms and the people in it flower . . . But to those who care only for evil outrageousness and cruel deeds, far-seeing Zeus, Cronus' son, marks out justice [i.e. penalty]. Often even a whole city suffers because of an evil man who sins and devises wicked deeds. (*Works and Days* 225–7, 238–41, trans. Most)

Within Hesiod’s poem, these images function as part of a cumulative case for the good life.⁶⁴ It is in the narrative of the races that the contrast between justice and ὕβρις begins (see pp. 65–6 above), thereafter developed through allegory, personification, images of cities and then warnings addressed to kings. If the text of Plato’s *Republic* can be shown to prompt comparisons between Socrates’ project and this didactic context in Hesiod, Socrates’ use of cities as analogous to states of a soul⁶⁵ emerges as, in part, a radical transformation of Hesiod’s application of such a mixture of images to his audiences.⁶⁶ To establish the legitimacy of this view is the final goal of the present section, but I shall argue first that within the *Republic*, the prompt to keep in mind the argumentative course of Hesiod’s text is found in appropriations of ‘Hesiod’s races’.

It is of course important that it is precisely for the presentation of justice in the *Works and Days* that Hesiod is initially mentioned in the *Republic*. Adeimantus adduces part of Hesiod’s presentation of the Just City (*WD* 233–4, above) to show that it connects justice with material prosperity (*Rep.* 2.368a8–c3). What is now required from Socrates is an entirely different basis for advocating justice. The *Works and Days* is first in focus, then, as an argument against which Socrates’ own procedure is to be compared.

The context of this reference, however, means that in itself it will not guide Plato’s readers back to Hesiod in particular. Adeimantus cites his argument for justice only alongside something ‘similar’ (παράπλησία) in Homer (*Odyssey* 19.109, 112–13 on the good king, cited at *Rep.* 2.363b6–c3). If Homer’s poetry too can thus be classified as an ‘argument for justice’, the mere citation of Hesiod by Adeimantus does not in itself indicate that Plato, through Socrates, is about to engage seriously with an argumentative method recognized as specifically ‘Hesiodic’.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Brown (1998) 389–90.

⁶⁵ On the difficulties of this analogy, see first Williams (1974).

⁶⁶ Zatta (2010) 26 notes that Hesiod’s re-presentation of Golden-Age features in the Just City paves the way for Plato’s politicization of the first stage, at least.

⁶⁷ Nor would such an engagement preclude extended structural reference to Homer; cf. O’Connor (2007) on how *Republic* fuses references to the *Odyssey* with Hesiodic themes.

True, Socrates himself cites from the *Works and Days* with approval; he asserts, against Adeimantus, that those put in charge of the ideal city, once they understand that possessing private property will detract from their role as its 'guardians', will understand 'that Hesiod was really wise in saying that the half is worth more than the whole' (*Republic* 5.466c1–2, citing *WD* 40). Plato may well expect his readers to recall that in the *Works and Days*, this advice was addressed to rulers who were disregarding justice.⁶⁸ Given the broader use of poets as ethical authorities, however,⁶⁹ claims for significant connections between the *Republic* and the *Works and Days* must be based on echoes of Hesiod that distinguish him from the 'noisy throng of books by Musaeus and Orpheus' (364e3) and from more recent predecessors for Plato's thoughts about civic justice, such as Solon or Aeschylus, or (to an extent) any discussion of monarchy and justice composed in the wake of the *Works and Days* and *Theogony*.⁷⁰

One series of allusions to Hesiod *does* achieve this distinction – Socrates' references to Hesiod's narrative of races (*WD* 106–201). This particular representation of human history is not in Homer, nor what is extant of Solon or Aeschylus. In the *Republic*, Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron γένη (in Hesiod, equally 'races' and 'eras') are presented as contemporaneous human races in Socrates' notorious story for Kallipolis (*Rep.* 414b–5c), which states that the citizens were born from the earth with gold, silver and bronze or iron in their souls, and should accordingly be kept in three distinct classes; the rulers of each generation must guard the composition of each class, since an oracle has stated that the city will be ruined if it has an Iron or Bronze guardian. The relevance of this 'noble lie' of natural hierarchy to the project of portraying Kallipolis is forcefully signalled by the fact that the metallic men of the myth are transferred directly *into* the potentially ideally just community: 'Let's

⁶⁸ On recollection of the context, see Halliwell (1993) on *Republic* 5.466c2.

⁶⁹ On the tendency to locate ῥήματα and γνώμαι ('set phrases / opinions') in poetic texts, cf. Halliwell (2000) 98ff., citing *Laws* 7.811a and Aristophanes *Frogs* 97.

⁷⁰ See Rosati (2009) 369 on ancient responses to the praise of kings in *Theogony* 80–93, Koning (2010) 172–7 on what Plato's predecessors and contemporaries took from Hesiod on the subject of justice.

arm these earthborn men and bring them forth, led by their rulers’ (415d5–6).⁷¹

In itself, however, Socrates’ initial combination of myths, billed as ‘something Phoenician’ (414c4),⁷² does not yet proclaim his use of *Hesiod’s* narrative (rather than oriental metallic sequences or other archaic tri-functional schemes)⁷³ as the basis for the sketch of Kallipolis. Its Hesiodic inspiration is indirectly acknowledged by *Rep.* 468e5–69a3, where Socrates derives the post-mortem title of ‘golden’ for *all* outstanding ‘guardians’ in Kallipolis from Hesiod’s statement that the Golden race after death became δαίμονες and ‘guardians’ of current mortals (*WD* 122–3; cf. 252–3). However, the full significance of Socrates’ move for the *Republic* (especially given the similarly synchronic reinterpretation of these lines at *Cratylus* 397e5–98b7; see above p. 97) does not emerge until Hesiod is still more explicitly credited for the metallic myth, as the framing project recommences in *Republic* 8.

Here, Socrates presents a warning from ‘the Muses’ that Kallipolis will decline through civil strife when the metallic classes mix. According to the Muses, this will happen after the rulers, through ignorance of the ‘geometric number’ which identifies the cycle of human fertility, will engineer marriages in the citizen population at the wrong time. Their descendants, born at unpropitious times, will begin to neglect the Muses, and, as rulers, they will fail to test τὰ Ἡσιόδου τε καὶ τὰ παρ’ ὑμῖν γένη (547a1 – literally: ‘the races of Hesiod, which are also those among you [citizens]’). The consequent *stasis* (547a1–6) will result in a compromise between the money-making, property-owning impulses of the Iron / Bronze types, and the impulses of those ‘rich in their souls’ towards virtue (547b2–c4). Socrates takes over the account with his question at 547c6–7, rephrasing the Muses’ description in

⁷¹ Ophir (1991): 75 notes the ‘impossible infusion of a myth told *in* the city with a myth told *about* it’.

⁷² Schofield (2006) 284 agrees with those who argue that this label derives from the Cadmeian element, but judges that its point is to suggest that there is something not entirely civilized about the story. It may also refer to the Phoenician association with money noted within the *Republic* itself: for discussion see Hesk (2000) 160.

⁷³ Hence Hartman (1988), demonstrating the ‘Hesiodic roots’ of the classes in Kallipolis without reference beyond *Rep.* 4, recalls the races myth only through Vernant (1960) and Nagy (1979).

political terms: 'Then, isn't this constitution a sort of midpoint between aristocracy and oligarchy?' Applying the city-soul analogy, he sketches out four faulty constitutions – timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny – as hypothetical stages in a continuous decline.

By emphasizing that the preservation of Kallipolis depends on 'testing' the metallic races, the Muses reaffirm the centrality of the 'noble lie' in Socrates' project to sketch the extremes of justice and injustice. Plato's reason for connecting the races back to Hesiod at this juncture, however, is not immediately obvious. I turn now to the question of what is gained by raising Hesiod's profile in *Republic* 8.

3.3b *An urgent choice*

I shall first argue that Socrates' account of constitutional decline appropriates for the *Republic* the urgency of choosing justice that underlies Hesiod's address to Perses and the kings. In view of Socrates' stated goal of identifying and comparing the *extremes* of justice and injustice in cities and men, his detailed analysis of the intermediate constitutions has been termed 'needless complexity'.⁷⁴ Leo Strauss, however, observed and briefly puzzled over the fact that when Socrates rephrases the Muses' account of decline in political terms, his sketch of constitutional decline recalls Hesiod's temporal sequence of Gold, Silver, Bronze, Heroic and Iron races.⁷⁵ In retrospect, the re-introduction of Hesiod's name in conjunction with the races just before Socrates' account does seem to invite comparisons,⁷⁶ and Strauss' followers have found several verbal and thematic correspondences between parallel stages of these five-part series.⁷⁷

For Strauss, the main point of interest in such a parallel is that the 'odd one out' in each sequence is the fourth stage, the Heroes and

⁷⁴ Pappas (1995) 165. ⁷⁵ Strauss (1964) 130–2. ⁷⁶ de Callatay (2005) 186 n. 28.

⁷⁷ E.g. Hanasz (1997) 40 notes that in Socrates' vision, oligarchy, in which rich and poor communities coexist, collapses in mutual destruction, like Hesiod's Bronze race. Other parallels are rather more strained: e.g. 'mutual envy and violence dominate' in both the timocratic city and among Hesiod's Silver men (40) and they share a 'childhood motif' (*WD* 130–3 (century-long childhoods), *Rep.* 548b6–7: the rulers of the timocratic city 'running away from the law like boys from their father').

democracy respectively, each of which apparently interrupts a sequence of increasing degeneration. After the ‘sick body’ of oligarchy (556e4), Socrates introduces democracy as ‘perhaps the most beautiful of the constitutions’ (557c4) with its emphasis on freedom and pleasure. So in Hesiod, the generation of Heroes is ‘more just and better’ (*WD* 158: δικαιότερον καὶ ἄρειον) than their predecessors, the hyper-aggressive men of Bronze, and while the Bronze race descend to Hades and become ‘nameless’, some Heroes, at least, obtain a carefree afterlife on the Blessed Isles. The variety of their different fates within this, the only non-metallic race in Hesiod’s sequence, is also counted significant for Socrates’ vision of democracy not as a coherent constitution but rather as a ‘supermarket of constitutions’ (*Rep.* 557d6: παντοπώλιον ... πολιτειῶν). Strauss concluded from this that democracy is the only constitution other than Kallipolis in which philosophers could survive undisturbed. Bringing in circumstantial evidence from other dialogues, he and his followers suggest that the main point to draw from a parallel with Hesiod’s races narrative is that Plato was not as anti-democratic as has been thought.⁷⁸

As an analysis of Hesiod’s role in *Republic* 8, this purely political conclusion is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, such an assessment of what Plato took from Hesiod does not illuminate the particular pattern of references to Hesiod’s races in this dialogue. The foregoing reference to ‘Hesiod’s races *and those among you*’ recalls the present context, Socrates’ argument for Glaucon and Adeimantus, which should guide interpretations of Socrates’ vignettes. Given Socrates’ selective applications of ‘Hesiod’s races’ in his ‘noble lie’, there is no reason to assume that the Muses’ expression sets up nothing more and nothing less than one-to-one correspondences between the sequences. Indeed, such

⁷⁸ Strauss (1964) 131, citing the *Seventh Letter* 324d7–8; looking back on Athenian democracy from the rule of the Thirty Tyrants, Plato calls it ‘golden’. The ‘mixed constitution’ in the *Laws* has democracy as one of its main elements. Hanasz (1997) cites also *Crito* 52e–53a, *Apol.* 29d and the *Protagoras*: no other political order is explicitly preferable to democracy. Against such readings, Schofield (2006) 114 points out that Socrates never discusses freedom of speech. Still Socrates’ presentation of democracy may be a different kind of Platonic reflection on Athenian democracy – on its contemporary echoes, see, variously, Hitz (2010), Campion (1994) 225 and Annas (1981) 300.

an assumption obscures aspects of Socrates' presentation and their potential as clues to the *use* of Hesiod's narrative in the service of Socrates' argument.

This can be seen from the second objection to Strauss: that his emphasis is misleading. A parallel with the Heroic afterlife as depicted by Hesiod can indeed be identified in Plato's text, but it is one that *depends* for the most part on a rather sinister irony,⁷⁹ comparable to that with which Socrates will speak about the tyrant as a 'happy' and 'blessed' figure (567c1, d1, e7, 574c8) around whom 'drones' are said to spring up αὐτόματοι as bodyguards (567d10: re-casting in nightmarish terms the spontaneous abundance of Hesiod's golden γένος *WD* 118). A similar note is struck already in democracy; a criminal condemned to death or exile walks around the city 'like a hero' (558a8: ὥσπερ ἥρωες) although meant to be, like Hesiod's Heroes, dead or removed from men (cf. δίχ' ἀνθρώπων *WD* 167). Only 'women and children' judge democracy the 'finest and most beautiful' of the constitutions, as they would a multi-coloured cloak (*Rep.* 557c5–9). Its pleasure is 'divine' but, like the Heroes, short lived ('for the moment', ἐν τῷ παραυτίκα 558a2). In Socrates' description, far from conveying approval of democracy, evocations of the Heroic afterlife according to Hesiod work to heighten the discomfort.

On closer examination, the discomfort is reinforced by other details that recall, not the Heroes, but Hesiod's vision of the 'Iron' future. According to Hesiod, the arrival of humanity's final stage will be marked by the birth of grey-haired babies; family harmony will be lost ('father will not be like-minded with sons, nor sons at all': οὐδὲ πατήρ παίδεσσιν ὁμοίος οὐδέ τι παῖδες *WD* 182) and its traditional hierarchy disregarded: 'they will dishonour their ageing parents' (γηράσκοντας ἀτιμήσουσι τοκῆας *WD* 185). This last finds an echo in Socrates' image of the tyrant, parricide and 'harsh nurse to old age' (*Rep.* 569b6–7: χαλεπὸν γηροτρόφον). Compare too, however, the description of how, as democracy increases to extremes of freedom, artificial attempts at 'likeness' indicate that

⁷⁹ Pace Hanasz (1997) 41: 'His presentation is full of irony, sarcasm, and grotesquerie but does not seem to be very hostile.'

the hierarchy of old and young is suspended or reversed – perhaps a rationalization of the ‘grey-haired babies’ who announce the nadir in Hesiod’s vision:

A father accustoms himself to behave like (ὅμοιον) a child and fear his sons, while the son behaves like a father, feeling neither shame nor fear in front of his parents (μήτε αἰσχύνεσθαι μήτε δεδιέναι τοὺς γονέας), in order to be free ... And, in general, the young imitate their elders and compete with them in word and deed, while the old stoop to the level of the young (οἱ δὲ γέροντες συγκαθιέντες τοῖς νέοις) and are full of play and pleasantries, imitating the young for fear of appearing disagreeable and authoritarian. (*Republic* 8.562e7–63a1, 563a7–b2, trans. Grube and Reeve)

One might argue that democracy is a special case. Like Hesiod’s fourth race, it is more differentiated than the other stages, such that echoes of *multiple* Hesiodic races would arguably underline Socrates’ point that democracy resembles a ‘supermarket of constitutions’.⁸⁰ But the portrait of the democratic man, who contains all characters,⁸¹ suggests that all such constitutions should be equally prominent in the democracy, whereas in Socrates’ ‘sketch’ of democracy, echoes of Hesiod’s Iron race are to the fore. Within the rhetoric of the *Republic* itself, moreover, there is a strong sense in which democracy *should* be the final stage of Socrates’ sequence. As the extreme of disorder and disunity, democracy is at the other end of the spectrum from the tightly knit Kallipolis, in which all is held in common.⁸² Echoes of Hesiod’s final race have the effect of reinforcing this point.

The sense of climax is supported by the sheer extent of the discussions of democracy and tyranny by comparison with the other constitutions. Such proportions call attention to the fact that in Hesiod’s account, the vision of the ‘Iron’ future receives almost twice as much space as any of the past races. In the *Works and Days*, this ratio functions as a rhetorical strategy, marking the speaker’s response to the immediate threat of unjust behaviour

⁸⁰ So O’Connor (2007) 86–7, concluding (like Strauss) that Plato finds in Hesiod mythic praise of democracy, insofar as it ‘allows the escape of heroes back to the golden age, whether in reformed communities or as isolated individuals’.

⁸¹ He is sometimes an athlete, sometimes he dabbles in philosophy (561d2–3). Sometimes he resembles victory-loving timocrats (κἂν ποτέ τινας πολεμικοὺς ζηλώσῃ), sometimes money-loving oligarchs (χρηματιστικούς, ἐπὶ τοῦτ[ο φέρεται] 561d5–6).

⁸² So Pappas (1995) 160.

from Perses and the kings.⁸³ With this in mind, the shape and content of Socrates' sketch of decline makes sense as a response to the analogous pressure from Glaucon and Adeimantus in *Republic* Book 2. His extended descriptions of both tyranny and democracy,⁸⁴ partially intertwined,⁸⁵ accelerate the sense of decline by implying that democracy is to be viewed as part of the long final deterioration. There may even be an echo of Hesiod's two-stage Iron race in Socrates' surprising announcement that the tyrannical man has not yet reached the extreme of wretchedness – the man who has an opportunity to become an actual tyrant has it even worse (578b–9d).

Recalling the Hesiodic context of the metallic narrative helps to illuminate the function of at least one detail in the current rhetorical project. The sudden appearance of the term ὕβρις in the democratic constitution functions as a 'Hesiodic' reminder of the urgency of making an ethical choice. In Socrates' vision of the democratic soul, positive and negative qualities are starkly re-valued and re-named:

won't they call reverence foolishness and moderation cowardice, abusing them and casting them out beyond the frontiers . . . ? Having thus emptied and purged these from the soul of the one they've possessed . . . they proceed to return insolence (ὕβριν), anarchy, extravagance, and shamelessness from exile . . . They praise the returning exiles and give them fine names, calling insolence good breeding, anarchy freedom, extravagance magnificence, and shamelessness courage. (*Republic* 8.560d–561a, trans. Grube and Reeve)

ὕβρις stands out here, since the noun occurs in the *Republic* only at 400b2, 403a2 and in the description of the democratic constitution (again at 572c7).⁸⁶ Its repeated presence in Socrates' vision is all

⁸³ Recall (section 2.5 above) that Querbach (1985) argues that *Hesiod* added the Iron race to a pre-existing narrative of four races in order to emphasize the devastating effects of hubris.

⁸⁴ Tyranny (565c–576b) extends over fifteen Stephanus pages, and democracy (557a–565c) over thirteen; the preceding stages of decline from Kallipolis number c. fifteen pages in total.

⁸⁵ Having announced the topic of tyranny, Socrates elaborates on democracy (562a10–11, 564a10–b1), as Roochnik (2003) 101 observes. We might also think of this as a diachronic reflection of the fact that, in the 'noble lie', Iron is paired with Bronze as a single class.

⁸⁶ Pace Hanasz (1997) 45, who argues that the timocratic and oligarchic men 'commit the same hubris against one another as Hesiod's silver and bronze races', the interesting point is that the keyword is absent.

the more striking given the context of inverted values, which recalls the redirection of praise and blame in the era that Hesiod presents as the final stage of humankind:

οὐδέ τις εὐόρκου χάρις ἔσσεται οὐδέ δικαίου
οὐδ’ ἀγαθοῦ, μᾶλλον δὲ κακῶν ῥεκτῆρα καὶ ὕβριν
ἀνέρρα τιμήσουσι.

Nor will there be any grace for the man who keeps his oath, nor for the just man or the good one, but they will give more honor to the doer of evil and the outrage man. (*Works and Days* 190–2, trans. Most)

In the *Works and Days*, this is a key stage in Hesiod’s argument, for the exhortation to justice is developed in parallel with an injunction to avoid ὕβρις. The word appeared first in Hesiod’s account of the Silver race (*WD* 134: as adults, they could not keep themselves from mutual ὕβρις) and was a defining feature of the Bronze race (146: they cared only for acts of war and ὕβρις). Following the account of how ὕβρις will supplant δίκη in the worst era of Iron, these terms become the two poles of the present choice repeatedly put before Perses and the kings. Personifications of ὕβρις and δίκη are envisaged as running a race (217–18), before details from the Golden and Heroic races are resituated in the images of the just (δικαίου) city, and aspects of the Silver, Bronze and Iron races are recalled by the fortunes of ‘those who care only for evil outrageousness (ὕβρις τε μέμηλε κακή) and cruel deeds’ (238). ὕβρις is so prominent in the *Works and Days*, especially in opposition to δίκη, that it can be claimed as a Hesiodic keyword;⁸⁷ in the context of the city-soul analogy, then, its sudden appearance has the effect of drawing attention to Socrates’ sketch of decline as, like the ‘myth of the races’ in the *Works and Days*, a story that sets up a stark ethical choice for its audiences.

It is important to emphasize that Socrates’ use of the term ὕβρις at this point works to stress the urgency of making the right choice, not merely a sense of impending doom. In Hesiod, the fourth, ‘more just and better’ race is the only post-Golden stage in which this word does not appear. It seems no accident that immediately after introducing the term ὕβρις, Socrates repeats the possibility of

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 44 notes that ‘already in Homer *hybris* is opposed to *dike* . . . and *eunomia* . . . but with Hesiod it seems to assume some special importance’ before it is developed in tragedy.

halting one's personal decline (*Rep.* 561a), raised first at 560a; these 'notes' of despair and hope reinforce in Socrates' portrait of democracy the provocative mixture of motifs from Hesiod's generations of Heroes and Iron, described above. Socrates thereby harnesses for his address to Glaucon and Adeimantus one implication of the sharp contrast between the Heroes and the Iron generations in Hesiod's five-stage narrative: his listeners *today* have a choice to go down either path.

Moreover, the wording suggests that the races are picked up with an eye to the social status of Socrates' current audience. The opposition of ὕβρις to 'good breeding' (εὐπαιδευσίαν 560e5) not only supports arguments that ὕβρις was in Classical Athens typically an activity of the upper classes and also a vice of the young,⁸⁸ but in this context brings the whole account closer to Glaucon and Adeimantus as youthful elites in 'democratic' reality. A closer look at the pattern of references to Hesiod's races in the *Republic* reveals both Socrates' particular anxiety about keeping in check those powerful citizens who are not (yet) philosopher rulers, both in the theory of Kallipolis and in the 'real world' of his conversation with the sons of Ariston.

3.3c *Concern for the second-best types*

Both this complex target and its urgency are to some extent anticipated by Hesiod. Just after describing to Perses the smooth road to nearby Wickedness and the steep path to Virtue (*WD* 286–92), Hesiod distinguishes three levels of person; the πανάριστος ('best-of-all' individual) who thinks for himself long-term (*WD* 293–4), the ἐσθλός ('fine' person) who heeds the advice of someone speaking well (*WD* 295) and the 'useless' man (ἄχρητος ἄνθρωπος *WD* 296–7) who does neither of these. He then turns back to Perses: 'But you, always being mindful of our instruction' (ἀλλὰ σὺ γ' ἡμετέρης μνησθεὶς αἰὲν ἐφετμῆς *WD* 298ff.). The obvious implication, as I noted in [ch. 2](#) (p. 85), is that the *Works and Days* itself is the advice of the good speaker to be heeded; this puts Perses (and

⁸⁸ Fisher (1992) 1, 195. He finds (457–8) its appearance here in the *Republic* reminiscent of Alcibiades.

the other audiences) in the position of the ‘fine’ person who listens.⁸⁹ The *Works and Days* has no time for the ‘useless’ man; it is addressed to those with potential.

My reading of the races narrative brought out suggestive overlaps between Perses and the men of Silver in particular, who are given grotesque echoes in the Iron race (pp. 79–81 above). This too is a feature I find suggestive for Plato. The story in Hesiod illustrates the present,⁹⁰ but the future receives more space than any of the past races. The time when the wicked will overcome the righteous is yet to come (*WD* 179–80). Hesiod repeats the idea outside the frame of the myth, now reflecting on a possibility: ‘it is evil for a man to be just if the more unjust one will receive greater justice. But I do not anticipate that the counsellor Zeus will bring this about yet’ (*WD* 271–3). The prospect of downfall both allows time for the exhortation to justice and lends it urgency.

3.3c.i The ‘noble lie’: addressing auxiliaries

Socrates’ ‘noble lie’ replicates the combination of prevention and exhortation in Hesiod’s framing of the races narrative. It is designed to shore up the results of the project of working out who will rule Kallipolis (*Rep.* 3.412c1–14b7).⁹¹ Within the ‘noble lie’ itself, the emphasis is exhortatory – whereas in the story of Cadmus the ‘brotherhood’ of the earthborn warriors did not guarantee fraternal love⁹² – and the possibility of the city’s downfall is present only in the oracle that foretells the city’s ruin ‘when the man of iron or bronze is its guardian’ (415c). Just beyond the frame of the ‘lie’, however, Socrates presents another version of

⁸⁹ There is theoretically the prospect of becoming (eventually) the best type – hence, perhaps, Hesiod here (but only here) addresses Perses as ‘you of divine stock’ (Τέρον, δῖον γένος *WD* 299).

⁹⁰ Cf. the perfect tense of γεγάσσι (*WD* 108), whatever the line is taken to mean.

⁹¹ The rulers have just been selected from among the guardians because under testing ‘more [thoroughly] than gold in fire’ (413e1) they have proved to be the greatest ‘guardians’ of their conviction that they must do ‘what is best for the city’ (412e7). Henceforth, the term guardian will cover only these, the ‘complete guardians’ (414b1–2). The young remainder of the elite ‘whom we recently called guardians we will now call auxiliaries and allies of the guardians’ convictions’ (414b4–5). Socrates’ ‘noble lie’ follows on (οὖν 414b7) from this re-assignment of roles.

⁹² In fact, the mutual strife that arose nearly destroyed their race. Loraux (2002) 199–200 notes that often in Athenian tragedy, brothers are born only to tear one another apart.

the potential future. He confides to Glaucon his greatest fear: that the auxiliaries, these 'pedigree dogs' (cf. 2.385d11–e3), will become like wolves to their own flock (416a5–6 – cf. 415e2–3, of the external enemy). This fear motivates the creation of communal housing for the guardians, together with a ban on private property and all contact with mortal 'gold or silver' (416d4–17a5), for if corrupted by mortal possessions, the guardians would destroy the city from within: 'hating and being hated . . . fearing internal enemies more than external ones' (417b2–4).⁹³

The warning emphasis is developed in Book 8, where the Muses give more details of the breakdown from Kallipolis (547a1–c4): from the mixing of metallic races, 'unlikeness will be engendered' (ἀνομοιότης ἐγγενήσεται 547a3).⁹⁴ While in Book 3 the oracle of an Iron/Bronze guardian picked out the proximate cause of downfall, the account of decline in Book 8, marked as the sequel by the Muses' reference to the metals at 547a, presents a picture differing in pace and perspective. Yet one image at the nadir of Socrates' sequence recalls his striking characterization of the Silver race; the fact that the evolution of democracy's popular champion into a paranoid tyrant is figured also as a transformation into a wolf (565e1, 566a4).

When we bear in mind the capacity for corruption in Silver characters (see 3.3c.ii below), we can understand the rhetoric and the urgency of the 'noble lie'. Ostensibly, Socrates' story of autochthony and metallic admixtures is directed at the whole ruling group,⁹⁵ but its twofold message of natural fraternity and natural inequality is primarily aimed at the *almost*-rulers, each of whom (unlike the producers) was originally considered a 'potential guardian' (φυλακικὸς ἐσόμενος 375e8–9). Only after discussing in detail

⁹³ Recall that the essence of the worst 'Iron' era in Hesiod is mutual hatred and disgust between those who should trust each other: 'nor [will] guest [be likeminded] with host, nor comrade with comrade, nor will the brother be dear, as he once was', *WD* 183–5.

⁹⁴ The metaphor of bringing birth to 'unlikeness' in this context *may* recall one of the first points in Hesiod's description of the future: 'nor will father be like-minded (ὁμοίος) with his sons, nor sons at all' (*WD* 182). Socrates' account of constitutional decline gives this literal force; in each generation, the son is unlike his father.

⁹⁵ The lie aims to persuade 'for preference the rulers too, but failing that, at least the rest of the city' (414d2–3). For the force of μάλιστα μὲν καὶ . . . εἰ δὲ μή, cf. e.g. Thuc. 5.21.3, Arist. *Met.* 1083a16.

the education of the elite (376e–412b) did Socrates consider how to subdivide this group into ‘those who will rule and be ruled’ (διαίρετέον ... αὐτῶν τούτων οἵτινες ἄρξουσὶ τε καὶ ἄρχονται 412b9–c1). The syntax and presentation of the metallic ‘lie’ itself reflects the care with which he negotiates the feelings of the men defined as ‘Silver’; throughout, a division between rulers and auxiliaries occurs, if at all, only within larger syntactical and rhetorical suggestions of unity.⁹⁶ Socrates must reconcile ‘Silver’ characters to their roles as ‘auxiliaries’ to Golden ‘rulers’, but the risk is that those with high spirits and sharp intellects will find their secondary quality peculiarly galling. Thus, Socrates’ story is both ‘expedient’ (ἐν δέοντι 414b8) and ‘cheeky’ (τόλμη 414d1); these people have just been defined as ‘auxiliaries’ precisely because they have *not* proved to have as much love for the city as those they are now instructed to support. Hence, unless Socrates ensures that the *auxiliaries* really care for the city and each other, the welfare of the community is under threat.⁹⁷

3.3c.ii Republic 5: addressing ‘Silver’ interlocutors

The need to control the soldiers⁹⁸ becomes more explicit and is explicitly connected with *Hesiod*’s narrative in *Republic* 5 (468e–469a), where post-mortem promotion to the Golden race is suggested among other incentives for auxiliaries to serve the city. Socrates shrewdly applies to the Silver citizens who die with distinction on active service *Hesiod*’s last words on the *Golden* race, that upon their death ‘they become *daemones* ... guardians (φύλακες 469a2) of mortal men’. Plato’s readers may well recall the contrasting fate of *Hesiod*’s Silver men:

⁹⁶ E.g. in drawing the moral Socrates exhorts the guardians collectively, but in the injunction to plan and defend their country as their mother and nurse (414e3–5), the verbs βουλευέσθαι (‘plan’) and ἀμύνειν (‘defend’) subtly distinguish the activities of rulers and auxiliaries, while the third class is described as ‘the rest’ or ‘the other’ (ὑπὲρ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν 414e5). In the metallic myth, the metals of rulers and auxiliaries are distinguished within an address to all the guardians: ὅσοι μὲν ὑμῶν ἱκανοὶ ἄρχειν ... ὅσοι δ’ ἐπικούροι, ἄργυρον (415a4–5), but ‘the farmers and the other workmen’ (415a7) are referred to in the third person. Cf. Schofield (2006) 289, also 311–12 on the address to citizens at *Laws* 713–15.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 286 emphasizes that love for the city (unlike the belief that its interest coincides with one’s own) is not in the *Republic* presented as achievable by rational argument.

⁹⁸ Emphasized by Coby (2001).

Plato's 'Hesiodic' projects

ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἄρ' ἡβήσαι τε καὶ ἡβης μέτρον ἵκοιτο,
 παυρίδιον ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χρόνον, ἄλγε' ἔχοντες
 ἀφραδίης· ὕβριν γὰρ ἀτάσθαλον οὐκ ἐδύναντο
 ἀλλήλων ἀπέχριν, οὐδ' ἀθανάτους θεραπεύειν
 ἠθελον οὐδ' ἔρδειν μακάρων ἱεροῖς ἐπὶ βωμοῖς,
 ἢ θέμεις ἀνθρώποις κατὰ ἡθεα. τοὺς μὲν ἔπειτα
 Ζεὺς Κρονίδης ἔκρυψε χολούμενος, οὐνεκα τιμὰς
 οὐκ ἔδιδον μακάρεσσι θεοῖς οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψε,
 τοὶ μὲν ὑποχθόνιοι μάκαρες θνητοὶ καλέονται,
 δεύτεροι, ἀλλ' ἔμπης τιμὴ καὶ τοῖσιν ὀπηδεῖ.

But when they reached adolescence and arrived at the full measure of puberty, they would live for a short time only, suffering pains because of their acts of folly. For they could not restrain themselves from wicked outrage against each other, nor were they willing to honor the immortals or to sacrifice upon the holy altars of the blessed ones, as is established right for human beings in each community. Then Zeus, Cronus' son, concealed these [men] in anger, because they did not give honors to the blessed gods who dwell on Olympus. But since the earth covered up this race too, they are called blessed mortals under the earth – in second place,⁹⁹ but all the same honor attends upon these as well. (*Works and Days* 132–42, trans. Most)

As a retrospective application of Hesiod's narrative to *Republic* Book 3, this clarifies Socrates' distinction of rulers from auxiliaries. Socrates' 'Silver' category consists of those who, tested 'more thoroughly than gold in fire', have not shown themselves quite as 'noble' as the Golden rulers in being resistant to spells (*Rep.* 413e2) that aim to corrode their beliefs. Golden men are still 'untainted' in adulthood (ἀκήρατον 414a1), by which time Hesiod's Silver men collapsed into ὕβρις (*WD* 134–5).

The presentation of the Hesiodic postscript in *Republic* Book 5, moreover, forces us to think harder about Socrates' own audience. Hesiod's verses on *daemones* are presented by Socrates to Glaucon in the form of a question: 'Won't we be persuaded by Hesiod, [that . . .]?' (οὐ πεισόμεθα Ἡσιόδῳ . . . 468e7), to which Glaucon agrees: Πεισόμεθα (469a3). The language recalls Socrates' 'noble lie' as an attempt to 'persuade' (πειῶσαι 414c1) his theoretical elite to serve the city (a sort of counter-spell to those to which those of

⁹⁹ Its unparalleled repetition with extended meaning (from the purely *chronological* sense, 'afterwards, a second race', v. 127, supplemented by 'much worse') may have inspired Socrates' hierarchical conception of the Silver race.

the second rank are too susceptible); the presentation of this sequel blurs the line between the ears of the ‘Silver’ men and those of Socrates’ interlocutors.

This is no accident, as a closer look at *Republic* 8 will make clear. As I noted in [ch. 2](#), the presentation of the Silver race in Hesiod seems designed to catch the attention of Perses in particular. Their fate is what he must avoid. Analogously, in Socrates’ discourse of Kallipolis, the characters he describes as Silver are framed to draw the attention of, and attention to, his own audience, at one remove from the best, with the power to help or harm the community.

3.3c.iii Republic 8: addressing timocrats

Bearing in mind the importance of Hesiod’s narrative of the Silver men as a stage within the argument for Perses, demonstrating the consequences of individual acts for the community (*WD* 240), it is worth highlighting first two aspects of this account which we shall find also in Socrates’ account of constitutional decline. The first is the sense of explanation targeted to Hesiod’s foolish brother. In Hesiod’s narrative, the Silver race is the only one before our own (Iron race) to decline and to suffer the wrath of Zeus, and it is this story which first suggests how a foolish and weak individual becomes part of a lawless society. At the same time, since, as with every stage in Hesiod’s discontinuous sequence, the Silver people are created fully formed, *already* ‘like the Golden [race] neither in body nor in mind’ (*WD* 129), the story’s point in the argumentative context of the *Works and Days*, despite its framing as human history (ὥς . . . γεγάασι in *WD* 108), is ultimately not explanation of decline but a cautionary tale for the present audience.

These elements in Hesiod’s Silver race shed light on the curious way in which Socrates imagines the downfall of Kallipolis¹⁰⁰ in *Republic* Book 8, following the Muses’ explicit recollection of ‘Hesiod’s races’. Critics have been troubled by Socrates’ description of the *starting-point* of degeneration, from a theoretical aristocracy to timocracy, in terms that recall ‘the world as it is’,¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Annas (1981) 295 notes the oddity of this idea: ‘surely the ideally just state is something that deficient states fall short of, not something that they result from’.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 298.

because this appears to weaken both his claim to explain the genesis (πῶς γίγνεται) of constitutions 'from the characters of those who live in them' (544e1),¹⁰² and the validity of the city-soul analogy.¹⁰³ Socrates charts the demise, not of the individual corresponding to Kallipolis, but of the timocrat envisaged as the *son* of a good father (πατὴρ ἀγαθοῦ 549c1–2) living in a badly governed city (οὐκ εὖ πολιτευομένη 549c2) in which men who live quietly are considered 'fools' (ἡλιθίους 550a3) and their opposites are praised. The good father is bad-mouthed by his wife (549c8–d1) and the household servants (*Rep.* 549d6–7), who exhort the son to be more of a man than his father.

Bearing in mind the role of Hesiod's Silver race as a warning for Perses, we can see that as a warning image for Socrates' honour-loving interlocutors, the generation gap in Socrates' vignette of the timocrat's genesis similarly both suggests and withholds explanation for decline, and the details of his surroundings significantly (and sometimes explicitly) evoke not only the world in which Socrates and his interlocutors live,¹⁰⁴ but also Hesiod's account of the 'Iron' present and future, in which all values are reversed. Of course, the son's corruption by those around him is perfectly in accord with Socrates' observation, back in *Republic* 6, that philosophers cannot flourish *as things are now*, since sophists and others tend to corrupt 'the philosophical nature' (τοῦ φιλοσόφου φύσιν) in promising young people (491e–2a – see also 538a–b on a child affected by flatterers more than his supposed family). Yet his household is similarly reminiscent of Hesiod's Iron era, except that where Hesiod envisages how 'the bad man will harm the

¹⁰² Cf. Vegetti (2005) 147–51 and Coby (1993) 22: 'not only does the citizen not plainly produce the city, but the city in no instance plainly produces the citizen'. Observe by contrast that the 'noble lie' of metallic races and divine creation removes the *need* for explanation or argument for different human capacities. A story of autochthony in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is likewise employed by Jupiter to cover up his liaison with Io – see ch. 5 below, p. 239.

¹⁰³ However, Lear (1992) 207 notes that generational decline in the story supports Plato's philosophical point: only the just constitution is entirely stable, and hence analogous between city and man.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. the wife chastises her husband in a manner familiar to Socrates' interlocutors (549d7–e1). It is here that Socrates begins the appeals to experience that characterize his account of the constitutions. Cf. e.g. 552b, c–d (referring to oligarchies generally), 556d2–e3 (on the poor as fitter than the rich), 563d (on seeing animals wandering around the country), 565c (people tend to set up a champion).

superior one, speaking with crooked discourses’ (*WD* 193–4), Socrates focuses on the feelings of the honour-loving mother (*Rep.* 8.549c7–d8).¹⁰⁵ Described here is the potential reaction of the auxiliaries to the ‘noble lie’, but resentment at not being part of the ruling group is here displaced onto the female, ‘disadvantaged . . . among other women’ (ἐλαττουμένης διὰ ταῦτα ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις γυναιξίν 549c9–d1), who has an equal capacity to damage the belief-structure of the next generation.¹⁰⁶ The danger is expressed by fusing Hesiod’s description of Silver children, who live παρὰ μητέρι κεδνῇ . . . ᾧ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ (*WD* 131) before they collapse into ὕβρις as adults,¹⁰⁷ with the image of the ‘more unjust’ and ‘wicked’ Iron men in Hesiod.

It may be that recalling ‘Hesiod’s races’ to begin a narrative of decline into tyranny is itself sufficient to recall that in the *Works and Days*, the five-stage account, although addressed initially to Perses, underlies a complex argument aimed also at those whose actions have an impact on the community (2.2b above). Hesiod’s remarks for ‘gift-eating’ kings (*WD* 39, 264), ‘who think baneful thoughts and bend judgements to one side by pronouncing them crookedly’ (261–2, trans. Most) converge with the exhortations to ‘foolish’ Perses first in the images of Just and Unjust cities (to which the kings are summoned to listen at *WD* 248). As was noted in 2.3 above, details from all the metallic races resurface in these, the passages for which Hesiod was first cited in the *Republic* (2.363b2–5). Their explanatory/warning force in Hesiod’s argument, however, rests on the link between individual and society, first apparent in the tragedy of the Silver race.

If Socrates’ appropriations of the races in the construction of *his* ethical argument via portraits of just and unjust cities recall the corresponding part of Hesiod’s exhortation, they may also draw

¹⁰⁵ On the intriguing switch of perspective effected in the syntax of 549d1–6, cf. Adam (1902) on this passage.

¹⁰⁶ Socrates thereby ‘proves’ that he would be right to legislate the common possession of women and children in Kallipolis (449c ff.).

¹⁰⁷ Proclus on *WD* 130–1 (citing *Laws* 3.694c ff. on the Persian character), inferred that this results from maternal solicitude in upbringing: ὁρθῶς καὶ πάνυ φιλοσόφως τοῦ κακοῦ βίου τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐν τῇ μοχθηρᾷ τίθεται ἀνατροφῇ, τοιαύτη δὲ πολὺν χρόνον ἐν τῇ γυναικωνίτιδι γενομένη (Pertusi (1955) 55). For modern psychological readings of Hesiod’s Silver men, see P. Smith (1980).

inspiration from its double target. The timocrat-to-be, as the son of an aristocrat immune to society's perversion of values, recalls not just 'the world as it is' but, more pointedly, the danger embodied by Socrates' interlocutors Glaucon and Adeimantus, whose cynical scenario of a supremely just man in an unjust world prompted Socrates ironically to adapt contemporary praise of *them* as 'sons of Ariston' (367e5–68a5). These brothers, unlike Thrasymachus, profess themselves to be on Socrates' side, yet, elite and talented as they are, they present a threat to the community until convinced that justice is worth practising for its own sake. In this respect, the 'sons of Ariston' embody the auxiliaries; those guardians at one remove from the best, who are critical to the success of Kallipolis.

No wonder, then, that the start of the sequence in *Republic* 8 draws attention to Socrates' interlocutors. Adeimantus, before he has heard details of the timocratic character, volunteers Glaucon as an example of it, citing his 'love of victory' (φιλονικία 548d8–9). Socrates only half-agrees to this idea, judging Glaucon more cultured than the timocrat (548e4–5) – a correction which serves to clarify the limited claims of the city-soul analogy and to re-emphasize its status as a didactic model more than a story 'about' real constitutions.¹⁰⁸ Yet elements of 'the world as it is' recur throughout Socrates' subsequent narrative,¹⁰⁹ and my argument implies that Adeimantus was rightly ready to see his brother's reflection in the descending sequence of individuals in Book 8, insofar as it is the tarnishing of souls such as their own that Socrates ultimately aims to prevent.¹¹⁰ As potential tyrants, these powerful individuals fuse the positions and inclinations of both Perses and 'crooked-judging' kings in the *Works and Days*, such that their use as an audience reflects back on the role of Hesiod's Silver race in highlighting for *both* addressees the communal significance of a personal ethical choice.

¹⁰⁸ Despite timocracy's label as the 'Cretan' constitution, on which see Calabi (2005); on the Laconizing thread in Plato, see Schofield (2006) 35ff.

¹⁰⁹ See n. 104.

¹¹⁰ See e.g. Ferrari (2003) 21. As he notes (35), it is within the Straussian tradition of reading the *Republic* that one finds the fullest treatment of these interlocutors as characters. Cf. Craig (1994) *passim*. On the use of Adeimantus as the interlocutor for the discussion of oligarchy, see Sikkenga (2002).

3.3d ‘Reading’ the *Works and Days*

With Socrates’ joint target in view, we have seen more clearly that all his ‘readings’ of Hesiod’s races in the *Republic* are driven by a concern particularly to work on the ‘second-best’ listeners (as Hesiod’s are too). Recognition of their common goal, urging just behaviour in a lively and spirited audience of those who have the power to strengthen or to destroy the community, directs us back to the bigger picture of the relationship between the language of metals and other images in Socrates’ exhortation to justice, compared with that of Hesiod.

Although Socrates replicates the shift of image in the *Works and Days*, from metallic races to cities, the argument in the *Republic* reverses the order of these diachronic and synchronic presentations. The ‘noble lie’ in Book 3 asserts a natural hierarchy of three levels, existing concurrently (compare Hesiod’s Just and Unjust cities), while Socrates’ account of constitutional change in Book 8 recalls the chronological thrust of the metallic narrative. Two factors explain this change: first, whereas the *Works and Days* develops ideas about justice and injustice simultaneously, the *Republic* does so sequentially, with justice first and injustice later;¹¹¹ second, Socrates in the *Republic* conceives of justice as stable, injustice as unstable.

The uses of Hesiod’s races in the *Republic*, however, do not only point to Socrates’ implicit highlighting of connections between the different images in Hesiod’s argument for justice; they serve also to bring out topics for discussion in their own right (cf. my reading of the *Statesman*, below [section 3.4](#)). I now aim to demonstrate that within an ethical project that bears structural and didactic analogies with that of the *Works and Days*, the ways in which Socrates makes use of Hesiod’s races in the city-soul analogy function further to suggest the philosophical potential of Hesiod’s multifaceted expression of the path to ἀρετή. In this section I shall single out two ‘Hesiodic’ concerns implied by the city-soul analogy to be worthy of philosophical debate:

¹¹¹ That is, Hesiod’s exhortation to justice is partly expressed through powerful images of injustice (*WD* 202–12, 220–4, 238–47), whereas in the *Republic*, Books 2–4 treat the good order, 8–9 the disorder.

relationships between individuals and communities (3.3d.i), and those between justice and humanity (3.3d.ii).

3.3d.i *Individual and community*

In *Republic* 3–4, the 'noble lie' and the discussion immediately following condemn the possibility of individual dissatisfaction with one's metallic ranking in the truly orderly city. By contrast, when Socrates goes on to describe the faulty regimes, we find radical disjunction between individual and community at the start of the sequence in Book 8. Socrates' account of the timocrat's genesis posits an aristocrat living in a community which (already) does not share his values. The timocrat's father shuns positions of office and lawsuits (δικας), and minds his own business even when this will put him at a disadvantage (549c3–5). For this he is reprimanded by his own wife. Socrates' depiction of the household and community from which the 'timocratic' youth emerges not only writes his father as a good man in a bad world, like the speaker of the *Works and Days* (see *WD* 174–5 on the wish not to be part of the current race of Iron), but takes literally and substantiates that speaker's fear for his (perhaps hypothetical) son ('right now may neither I myself nor my son be just among men, if the more unjust man shall have greater justice', *WD* 270–2).

When Hesiod's metallic labels are recalled and then replaced with political or psychological terms in the *Republic*, one effect is to consider how Hesiod envisages individuals within human communities. Metallic labels imply that every individual in that community is of the same 'cast' or 'character', but the Heroes have different destinies (*WD* 161–8) and Hesiod presents himself as out-of-sync with his Iron contemporaries. At the other extreme, it is emphasized for the benefit of the greedy kings that 'often' (πολλάκι *WD* 240) the whole city suffers for the behaviour of *one* bad man (*WD* 240–1). Looking back from the perspective of the *Republic*, this seems to be one of the few explicit thoughts in Hesiod about how an orderly society turns into its opposite. (There is no equivalent *explicit* hope in Hesiod that a good man in a bad society could reverse a downward communal trend.)

Making overt the question about how communal decline happens (*Republic* 8.545d–e; see [section 3.3e](#) below), Socrates'

account brings out clearly the tension inherent in putting into a sequence different ‘species’ of community, even without obvious statements of cause and effect. At the end of Book 4, Socrates announces that of the ‘unlimited’ forms of vice, there are four worth looking at (445c6–7). On recommencing this project in Book 8, he stresses that he will focus on those distinct ‘in kind’ (ἐν εἴδει 544c8–d1), which ‘have names’ (ὀνόματα ἔχουσιν 544c2) as if these forms are identifiable as distinct natural species.¹¹² Yet he also states his intention to explain how each character and constitution comes into being, a project which, insofar as it requires deviants within each system to effect the transformations, necessarily blurs the distinctions he has just set up.¹¹³ Insofar as Socrates’ five-stage sequence matches that of Hesiod, his account of aristocracy’s decline through timocracy, oligarchy and democracy to tyranny implies an evolutionary or psychological reading of the order and nature of Hesiod’s races (for which there is no explicit explanation in the *Works and Days*, even with the presence of the Heroes as ‘the generation before our own’). Indeed, Socrates ends by applying to the sequence an explanation for apparently discontinuous evolution *per se*: explaining how democracy is transformed into a tyranny, he likens it to the violent transition from oligarchy to democracy, and interprets the resulting zigzag: ‘excess in one direction generally tends to produce a violent reaction in the opposite direction’ (563e9–10).¹¹⁴

If the use of Glaucon and Adeimantus as an audience fusing the two internal audiences of Hesiod encourages parallels between the wider arguments of the *Works and Days* and the *Republic*, Socrates’ image of the tyrant’s internal disorder makes a further important point about the *Works and Days* as a whole; Hesiod too is

¹¹² It seems ironic that Socrates proceeds to find four different labels for the (unparalleled) second-best polity (first ‘Cretan or Laconian’, then ‘timocracy or timarchy’).

¹¹³ The idea of four εἶδη of vice corresponding to faulty constitutions is apparently developed by Socrates on the spot (‘as it seems to me from my perspective’, ὥσπερ ἀπὸ σκοπιᾶς μοι φαίνεται 445c4). Its novelty is suggested also by the fact that the interlocutors ask how many the types are and (both here and in Book 8) *what* they are. Yet it is introduced without a blush, unlike the ‘noble lie’ (cf. 414c6–d1, 414e6–15a1), whose embarrassment Schofield (2007) attributes to the Cadmeian myth.

¹¹⁴ A theory of over-compensation intriguingly close to the interpretation of Hesiod in ch. 2, n. 130.

concerned not just to offer instruction on how to live in society, but to some degree to address the individual *qua* individual. About to warn the kings that Zeus 'is well aware just what kind of justice this is which the city has within it' (*WD* 268–9), Hesiod presents a thought which, in retrospect, anticipates Socrates' point about the tyrant: 'A man contrives evil for himself when he contrives evil for someone else, and an evil plan is most evil for the planner' (*WD* 265–6). This is the central idea with which Socrates answers his interlocutors' challenge of proving the intrinsic value of justice. The *Republic*'s discussion of the tyrant's 'tyrannized' internal polity thus provides early evidence of, or may even have helped to create, the notion in antiquity that the *Works and Days* urges that *self-harm* results from injustice to others.¹¹⁵

This point is expanded in the final stages of the *Republic*, through the assertion, in the 'myth of Er', that the souls of those who do wrong in this life find tenfold payback in the afterlife (615a – see p. 131 below). It is supported by a second moral emerging from the way in which Socrates' city-soul analogy reads Hesiod's races in the context of the wider argument in the *Works and Days*; a reminder of the relationship between justice and humanity. I shall show how the latter part of Socrates' sequence in *Republic* 8 begins a process extending through *Republic* 9 and 10. Reworkings of metallic races and their aftermath in Hesiod form part of the way in which the argumentative frame of the *Republic* presents and re-presents the relationship between justice and humanity, and their opposites.

3.3d.ii *Justice and humanity*

Critics of Hesiod's races most often judge the sequence increasingly 'human' in its suggestion of a capacity to choose how to live.¹¹⁶ In *Republic* 8, by contrast, it seems that the constitutions in the final group are not distinctively human.¹¹⁷ Socrates'

¹¹⁵ See Hunter (2008a) on Callimachus' choice of *WD* 265–6 apparently to evoke the whole of the *Works and Days*, in the *Aetia* (fr. 2.5 Pfeiffer).

¹¹⁶ Cf. 2.5–2.6 above, with Most (1997) for the fullest articulation of this idea in Hesiod's sequence.

¹¹⁷ Fago (1991) 224 points out that whereas in Hesiod, the mortal races are defined by death, in Plato humanity is defined by access to eternal truth.

description of the degeneration from oligarchy to democracy to tyranny corresponds to the Bronze-and-Iron elements in Kallipolis, glossed in Book 4 as the third of three parts of the soul: reason, spirit and the multifaceted appetites (435c–41c).¹¹⁸ Kallipolis is comparable to the soul ruled by reason; timocracy is analogous to the soul ruled by spirit; and oligarchy, democracy and tyranny form a group, expressing rule by (respectively) necessary, unnecessary and lawless desires.¹¹⁹ Their rule is expressed in Socrates' sequence by the increasing prominence of non-human images.¹²⁰ The simile of the drone is introduced in oligarchy at 8.552c–d, and developed in democracy as a whole γένος of idlers (564b6–7),¹²¹ while both the tyrant in a tyranny and the tyrannical man are accompanied by drones.¹²² In addition, Socrates comments on the remarkable freedom of animals wandering the streets in the democratic city (563c3–10)¹²³ and describes the tyrant's evolution as a transformation into a wolf (565e1–6a4).

The context of the narrative in Hesiod provides a precedent for this shift. Ancient readers of Plato already noted how Thrasymachus' thesis that justice is 'the advantage of the stronger' (τοῦ κρείττονος *Rep.* 338c3) recalls the voice of the hawk exacting physical 'justice' on a nightingale within the αἶνος that Hesiod, following the narrative of races, directs towards the kings: 'he is foolish, who would wish to contend against the stronger' (κρείσσονας *WD* 210).¹²⁴ This is echoed at the end of *Republic* 8; Socrates concludes his account of tyranny by envisaging the people's complaints against the tyrant, and Adeimantus responds with

¹¹⁸ Cf. Pinotti (1998) on the trifunctionalism of the *Republic*. The fact that Bronze and Iron form a single class in Kallipolis anticipates the heterogeneity of the appetites to be controlled.

¹¹⁹ Sayers (1999) 136 expresses this as a diagram.

¹²⁰ See Petraki (2011) 189–91 for precedents other than Hesiod. She argues (233) that Socrates' increasing use of poetic quotations here helps to 'answer' Adeimantus' poetry-rich speech in Book 2.

¹²¹ Those with stings come to dominate, while the rest sit around the rostrum buzzing (564d9–10). This image in particular has been compared with that in Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1114–16. On the animal imagery in this section of the *Republic*, see Roscalla (2005).

¹²² Cf. Coby (1993) 32 on the inhumanity of the tyrant: 'a bug with a sting' (Eros).

¹²³ Indeed, he implies that the animals are superior: humans must get out of *their* way or be knocked down.

¹²⁴ Cf. Hunter (2008a) 158–9 on post-Platonic interpretations of the αἶνος and *WD* 274ff.

some relish: 'then indeed the people will really find out . . . that it was the weaker who was trying to drive out the stronger' (*Rep.* 569b1–2). The image of the tyrant-wolf serves to discredit the argument of Thrasymachus in *Republic* I, but also exposes the continuity between the physical 'justice' of Hesiod's Iron Age (δική . . . ἐν χερσὶ *WD* 192) and the cruelty of the hawk. Socrates' imagery reinforces the message that Hesiod makes explicit later on in his poem: humans are not truly human unless they behave with justice, the gift of Zeus; without it, they would be 'fish and wild beasts and birds' (*WD* 276–80).¹²⁵

But Socrates' emphasis on the inhumanity of injustice does not stop here. The animal images in the last three constitutions put the argument of Thrasymachus in *Republic* I in a wider perspective, and are themselves expanded in a model of a three-part human soul in Book 9 (588b10–e2). This is Socrates' most dramatic image of the appetites, as a 'many-headed beast',¹²⁶ joined with images of a lion (the spirit) and a man (reason) enclosed in a single sculpture.

The widest perspective on justice and humanity comes with the myth of Er in *Republic* 10, in which the topic of the consequences of justice and injustice for the individual are brought into relation with the operation of the cosmos itself. Here, Socrates tells how Er, who died in war and revived after twelve days, acts as a messenger for human beings from the world beyond. According to Er, human souls undergo a tribunal after death and during a thousand-year-long journey receive tenfold recompense for all they did in their past life, before they are given responsibility to choose the δαίμων of their next earthly cycle (617d–19b). Here, the soul's own character usually determines its choice (620a2–3), and correlations between humans, animals and birds are explicitly drawn. For example, the legendary poet Thamyris chooses the life of a night-ingle and the soul of Ajax chooses to change to the soul of a lion.

¹²⁵ The drones in the *Republic* may recall not only those of Aristophanes (see n. 121 above) but also Hesiod's implication that humanity is defined by *work*, as he warns Perses that both gods and men hate those who sit idle like 'stingless drones' (κηφήνεσσι κοθύροισι 304).

¹²⁶ For the wider poetic tradition of disorder figured as heterogenous creatures, beginning with Hesiod's own presentation of Typhon in the *Theogony*, see Too (1998) ch. 1. Scholarly debates about the image of the tripartite soul continue; see the contributions to Destrée and Hermann (2011).

The essential distinction, at the end of the story, retains an association between justice and humanity; among humans who choose the souls of animals, the unjust change into wild creatures (ἄγρια), and just people become tame ones (ῥήμερα 620d4).

Among many other poetic references in the complex texture of this story,¹²⁷ an allusion to Hesiod’s famous presentation of the path to virtue¹²⁸ draws attention to one point of critical unease: the fact that, as the *Republic*’s final example of how individuals can be persuaded towards justice, the story Socrates narrates seems to revert to the point from which his own argument began: the Hesiodic or Homeric emphasis on the *consequences* of justice and injustice for the individual, rather than justice for its own sake.¹²⁹ Given prior evidence of Socrates’ concern to target the souls of his interlocutors, however, I am inclined to agree with Ferrari’s suggestion that the divine rewards and punishments are presented for the ears of Glaucon the honour-lover, while the ensuing focus on the choice of lives *also* offers the reader of the *Republic* a perspective beyond Glaucon’s comprehension.¹³⁰

From all these examples it turns out, then, that, although forbidden to argue like Hesiod and Homer, Hesiod’s races function for Socrates as a prompt to draw various points out of Hesiod’s wider argument for Perses and the kings. *Republic* 8–9, incorporating the languages of metals, social functions, constitutions and psychological characters, pick up several possible connections between the images with which Socrates, like Hesiod, argues for justice.

It may be objected, however, that such a view of Socrates’ ‘Hesiodic’ pretensions attributes to him precisely the kind of reconstruction and appropriation of Hesiod’s ‘didactic’ authority displayed by Protagoras in the dialogue that bears his name. To meet this objection, I shall now demonstrate how the framing of Socrates’ account in *Republic* 8 more explicitly calls attention to the epistemological self-consciousness that makes Hesiod a poet

¹²⁷ On which see Halliwell (2006).

¹²⁸ *WD* 289–92 is recalled by *Rep.* 619d–e on ‘rough’ and ‘smooth’ roads for the post-mortem soul, in Socrates’ interim comment for Glaucon on Er’s tale.

¹²⁹ See e.g. Halliwell (1988) 18.

¹³⁰ Ferrari (2009), explaining the point that no soul is shown choosing a philosophical life – ‘no soul . . . can buy its harmony off the shelf’ (132).

worth appropriating as well as correcting.¹³¹ The key lies in Socrates' use of inscrutable Muses to begin the project of explaining Kallipolis' decline.

3.3e *Hesiod and Socrates*

What distinguishes Socrates as a narrator from those like Protagoras, I suggest, is the irony Socrates displays in undermining his own authority to teach; what makes his didactic stance 'Hesiodic' is precisely this self-consciousness about the likelihood of reaching truth and the provisional nature of his own authority. The main prompt (section 3.3e.i) emerges from the appearance of the Muses in *Republic* 8, which, by recalling the openings of both the major Hesiodic poems, invites reflection on the extent to which Socrates' own earlier argumentation too has been 'Hesiodic' (3.3e.ii).

3.3e.i *The Muses*

To describe what breaks the stability of Kallipolis, Socrates appeals 'like Homer' to the Muses to declare 'how civil war first broke out' (*Rep.* 545d8–e1 – cf. *Iliad* 1.1–7); his recourse to divine authority promises to lend his account an explanatory power usually beyond human reach.¹³² That promise is withdrawn, however, by his emphasis on the overwhelmingly poetic, teasing manner of the Muses' reply:

φῶμεν αὐτάς τραγικῶς ὡς πρὸς παῖδας ἡμᾶς παιζούσας καὶ ἐρεσχηλούσας, ὡς δὴ σπουδῇ λεγούσας, ὑψηλολογουμένας λέγειν;

Shall we say that they speak to us in tragic tones, as if they were in earnest, playing and jesting with us as if we were children? (*Republic* 545e1–3, trans. Grube and Reeve)

¹³¹ On the 'correction' of Hesiod, cf. Fago (1991) 224.

¹³² Cf. McCabe (2000) 9 commenting on the *Hippias Major* on the effect of ventriloquism *per se*: 'it allows the Socrates figure who is present to disavow authority for his own views, while suggesting that there may be some authoritative view . . . available. Then, it forces us to inquire what it would be to have such an authoritative view . . . So the effect of introducing *someone else* at a distance . . . is to provoke . . . reflect[ion] on the status of the theory itself; the philosophical pay-off of *the device itself* seems to be epistemological, or metaphysical, rather than ethical or political' (her italics).

Moreover, their answer to the riddle of Kallipolis’ downfall is, paradoxically, that it is beyond human understanding. Decline is inevitable, because even philosopher-rulers will be ignorant of the geometric number determining cycles of fertility and barrenness for human beings, and so will orchestrate marriages ‘at the wrong time’ (παρὰ καιρόν), from which the children will be ‘neither good natured nor fortunate’ (οὐκ εὐφρεῖς οὐδ’ εὐτυχεῖς 546d2).¹³³ The notorious obscurity of the Muses’ long mathematical exposition¹³⁴ reinforces their point that humans *cannot* explain and so hold on to perfection.¹³⁵

It is at this point that they recall ‘Hesiod’s races’ and describe the initial decline:

The intermixing of iron with silver and bronze with gold . . . will engender lack of likeness and unharmonious inequality, and these always breed war and hostility wherever they arise. Civil war . . . is always and everywhere ‘of this lineage’ (ταύτης τοι γενεᾶς). (*Republic* 547a2–6, trans. Grube and Reeve)

By citing from Glaucus’ declaration of ancestry in the *Iliad* (6.211), Socrates’ Muses appropriate for Kallipolis’ tragedy his famous exchange of gold armour for bronze.¹³⁶ In addition to Homer, however, their perspective combines the metals with the language of intercourse and generation familiar from the beginning of Hesiod’s *Theogony*, where the ‘race of men’ is first announced as a subject of song to follow the Muses’ account of the race of gods (*Th.* 44–50).¹³⁷

That context is evoked also by the reaction to and characterizations of the Muses’ speech. Glaucon remarks, ‘We’ll declare that

¹³³ The use of εὐτυχεῖς is ironic, since all the marriage lotteries are rigged.

¹³⁴ Cf. Adam (1902) on this passage. Allen (1994) 23 notes that Marsilio Ficino himself admitted that the passage terrified him.

¹³⁵ Already in the *Republic*, when Socrates noted that mathematical harmonics aspire to identify and explain ‘concordant’ numbers, Glaucon exclaimed: ‘You’re speaking of a superhuman task’ (δαιμόνιον . . . πρᾶγμα 531c5). Burnyeat (2000) 52 compares the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*.

¹³⁶ Cf. O’Connor (2007) 79 on Socrates’ other references to this now proverbially poor bargain.

¹³⁷ ὁμοῦ . . . μιγνέτος σιδηροῦ ἀργυρῶ . . . ἀνομοιότης ἐγγενήσεται 547a2–3 (*Th.* 56, 46), ἐγγένηται 547a4, τίκτει πόλεμον 547a5 (*Th.* 45, 60), ‘ταύτης τοι γενεᾶς . . . εἶναι στάσιν’ 547a5–6. For a possible echo of *WD* 182, see n. 94. Within the *Republic*, this language also recalls how philosophers are said to ‘mix’ with the Real, to be nourished and beget understanding (490b2–7) – Petraki (2011) 223.

the Muses reply [to your prayer] accurately'; Socrates replies, 'Necessarily, since they are Muses' (*Rep.* 8.547a7–8). Given their initial depiction, this is certainly a 'wry comment';¹³⁸ these Muses are not Homer's guarantors of truth. Rather, their pseudo-earnest voices emphasizing human fallibility recall the words of Hesiod's Muses in the *Theogony*:

ποιμένες ἀγραυλοί, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

Field-dwelling shepherds, ignoble disgraces, mere bellies: we know how to speak many false things similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things. (*Theogony* 26–8, trans. Most)

The case for an allusion to these verses in Socrates' presentation of the Muses is aided by the fact that an idea of useful 'falsehoods like the truth' (*Rep.* 382d3–4), within a critique of Hesiod, earlier formed the seeds of Socrates' own 'noble lie' of metallic races.¹³⁹ Therefore, an updated recollection of *Theogony* 27 before the Muses' recollection of 'Hesiod's races and those among you' ironically refigures Socrates as Hesiod by casting doubt upon his interpretative authority as he embarks on another version of Hesiod's metallic narrative.

On one level, such an echo has the effect of deflating Hesiod's claims to distinction. In the *Works and Days*, Hesiod confidently instructs Perses about sailing, recalling the limits of his own sailing experience just to recall that he beat other poets at a competition in Aulis because the Muses on Helicon granted him privileged knowledge (*WD* 646–62). By contrast, Socrates' detailed depiction of the Muses' speech points out that the Muses of the *Theogony* were in fact capriciously declaring their epistemological superiority to Hesiod even as they inspired him.¹⁴⁰ For the internal and external audiences of the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates ironically refigure himself as 'Hesiod' through a consciousness of the *limitations* of

¹³⁸ Allen (2006) 266 on *Rep.* 8.547a7–8.

¹³⁹ Belfiore (1985) argues that Plato interprets these lines so as to attack Hesiod's own poetic ability.

¹⁴⁰ See Stoddard (2004) ch. 3 for a survey of interpretations of *Th.* 26–8 towards the consensus that the Muses taunt Hesiod with their ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

human understanding. A second implication of the allusion, particularly pertinent to this reprise of the ‘noble lie’, is the scope for self-conscious reflection on unreliable storytelling. For the audience of the *Theogony*, the upshot of Hesiod’s reporting of the epiphany in this way is a sudden awareness of Hesiod’s own narration of the poem thus far; his authority is dependent on faith in his reporting.¹⁴¹ Socrates thus highlights the provisional nature of didactic authority granted to a potentially ‘lying’ narrator.

At the same time, however, the Muses’ combination of the language of the *Theogony* with material from the *Works and Days*¹⁴² may recall the meeting points of these two poems such as to indicate that for Socrates, ‘Hesiod’ is precisely not a figure who claims a once-and-for-all understanding of the world. Indeed, as a ‘lineage’ of civil *stasis* fusing the language of two Hesiodic poems, *Rep.* 547a2–6 on the decline of Kallipolis recalls (and perhaps rivals) the *Works and Days*’ opening revision of the *Theogony*’s genealogy of Strife (*Eris*) (*WD* 11–12: ‘after all [ἄρα], there was not just one race/birth [γένος] of Strifes, but on the earth there are two’). From Socrates’ perspective in *Republic* 8, this line would be worth picking up for its implication that Hesiod too is concerned to differentiate forms of disunity. Its pole position after the proem, moreover, in which Hesiod firmly demarcates his task from that of Zeus, suggests that ‘conscious revision’ will play an important role in the *Works and Days*. Recalled in the speech of Socrates’ Muses, ‘Hesiod’s races’ may be seen to provide just such an emphasis. Their material, which is re-presented in the *Works and Days* in the form of just and unjust communities, is first presented as ‘another/alternative’ (ἕτερον *WD* 106) to the tale of Prometheus and Pandora, itself provocatively recalling that in the *Theogony*. Perhaps, then, in the Muses’ speech, Plato has Socrates connect his reprise of the ‘myth of the races’ to the openings of *each* Hesiodic poem in order to signal his use of this story in its context as an emblem of Hesiod’s consciously plural, ever-revised view of the cosmos.¹⁴³

A further argument for drawing a positive significance from the ‘Hesiodic’ aspects of Socrates’ Muses is that the retention of

¹⁴¹ For this emphasis, see Ferrari (1988) 70–1.

¹⁴² Not only the metallic races; knowledge of the καιρός of birth and marriage (*Republic* 546a–d) dominates the final section of the *Works and Days* (694ff.).

¹⁴³ For this view of Hesiod’s corpus, see Clay (2003).

political authority, and by analogy the health of the soul's constitution, depends on cultivating these Muses; they ascribe political decay to the guardians' becoming 'less sensitive to music' (ἀμουσότεροι *Rep.* 8.546d7). A description of fully grown timocrats as those who have neglected 'the true Muse – that of discussion and philosophy' (548b8–c1) makes clear in retrospect that the Muses of 546–7 are those of philosophy, whose command of the ideal city has been sketched out in *Republic* 5–7.¹⁴⁴ Yet their playful re-presentation of Hesiod's races suggests not so much a rejection as a new appropriation of 'Hesiodic' judgement. It was noted above (section 3.3c.i) that the 'noble lie' builds on a re-categorization of the classes in Kallipolis. Now in *Republic* 8, the metallic races again appear as self-conscious focal points for a re-categorization, this time of discourses (no longer purely 'poetic' and 'political' but 'philosophical') in Socrates' redefinition of the path to virtue. Insofar as 'testing' the metallic races is identical with preserving Kallipolis, then, 'testing' the application of the races in their Hesiodic contexts is an expression of Socrates' parallel aim of preserving the potential for just rule in Glaucon and Adeimantus.

What are the implications of this reading of *Republic* 8 for our opening question about the relationship between Socrates' and Hesiod's arguments for justice? Bearing in mind the reflection of Hesiodic authority emerging from Socrates' use of the Muses, I shall suggest that Hesiodic inspiration lies behind even 'anti-Hesiodic' elements in Socrates' argument.

3.3e.ii *Socrates as Hesiod: construction and reconstruction*

I have been arguing that through Socrates' revisions of Hesiod's races, the *Republic* picks up Hesiodic concerns – relations between individual and community, justice and humanity – in arguing that the avoidance of personal and communal decline lies in a redefinition of the route to ἀρετή. As I pointed out in section 3.3a above, it is arguably only the recollections of his races which trigger awareness of Hesiod as a reference point, since Plato had many predecessors other than Hesiod for a concern with the nature of justice.

¹⁴⁴ See *Rep.* 499d3–4, with Murray (2004) 374ff. on Plato's appropriation of Muses for philosophy.

Once the connection has been made, however, we can note that in both the *Works and Days* and the *Republic*, the key point about choosing between justice and injustice is articulated after a myth of metallic races (*WD* 213 with *Rep.* 4.420c1, recalled at the start of *Republic* 8, 544a6–7 and 545b1–2).

Yet Socrates was set the task of arguing for justice without reference to material rewards, and this *anti*-Hesiodic purpose finds clear expression in Socrates’ constant undermining of monetary ‘value’,¹⁴⁵ particularly where the metallic myth is in view. Following the ‘noble lie’, the guardians are forbidden private property and all contact with mortal currency because ‘they have in their souls divine gold and silver, which it is impious to defile with human gold’ (*Rep.* 416e4–17a1). Besides the adoption of an aristocratic ‘language of metals’,¹⁴⁶ materialist paradises are clearly in question; recall Socrates’ opinion that the primitive city, which Glaucon calls a ‘city of pigs’, is actually the one that is healthy (ὕγιής 372e7).¹⁴⁷ While Socrates initially reproves Adeimantus even for referring to the standard way in which individuals are considered ‘blessedly happy’ (μακαρίους 419a10), he later claims that, within the well-governed city, the guardians in fact ‘will live a life more blessedly happy (μακαριώτερον) than that [which men count] most blessedly happy (τοῦ μακαριστοῦ βίου), the life of the victors in the Olympian games’ (465d3–4). Later still, ‘true wealth’ is defined as ‘not money, but a good and wise life’ (οὐ χρυσοῦ ἄλλ’ . . . ζωῆς ἀγαθῆς τε καὶ ἔμφορον 521a3–4).

This reconfiguration of the terms of mortal happiness is taken further in *Republic* 8. We learn from the Muses that when rulers fail to prevent the mixing of iron and silver, bronze and gold,¹⁴⁸ the consequent civil war (στάσις 547a1–6) will result in a compromise

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Vegetti (1998) 452 for references to the value of gold and silver throughout the Platonic corpus.

¹⁴⁶ See *ch. 1*, n. 135. Cf. *Rep.* 6.485d–e on the ‘counterfeit’ philosopher.

¹⁴⁷ For the point that Hesiod’s Golden race live in conditions of material, not moral, bliss, cf. e.g. Nelson (1998) 70ff. Questioning of the traditional Golden Age, using *philosophy* as the new criterion for the judgement of happiness, becomes explicit in Plato’s *Statesman* – see *section 3.4* below.

¹⁴⁸ Confusion perhaps based on the respective colours, but Coby (1993) 37 n. 10 argues that its ‘truth’ is borne out within the *Republic* (citing 373d, 495c–e): ‘The mixing of iron and silver means the mixing of farmers and warriors; . . . [that] of bronze and gold means the mixing of artisans and philosophers.’

between their money-making and virtuous impulses (547b2–c4).¹⁴⁹ In view of Glaucon and Adeimantus' original challenge to Hesiod's link between prosperity and justice, Socrates' markedly materialistic account of decline¹⁵⁰ emerges as a rhetorical tactic in line with a resolutely pure argument for justice: 'don't virtue and wealth always tilt in opposite directions?' (550e7–8). Book 9 is the climax: the profiles of a philosopher and a profit-lover emerge as diametrically opposed, and in the comparison of their respective 'pleasures' (581c ff.), the profit-lover is condemned. At 589d–e, the tyrant is identified as one who possesses lots of gold but is wretched.

In the light of Socrates' use of teasing Muses to cast doubt on his own 'Hesiodic' authority, however, the contrast between virtue and wealth takes on a new charge, for it is used within the *Republic* to unseat Socrates in his own search for justice. In Book 1, responding to Thrasymachus' demand for an 'answer', Socrates compared their careful search for justice to a search for gold, describing justice as 'a thing more valuable (τιμιώτερον) than much fine gold' (336e7). In Book 5, however, when Socrates demurs at the prospect of pausing to explain his ideas about guardian life, Thrasymachus himself asks: 'are we here to search for gold or to listen to an argument?' (450b4–5). That is, he pointedly reapplies Socrates' original term of comparison, the material goal towards which they are *not* striving, as a rebuke: the argument should proceed at a more slow and careful pace. The opposition of 'searching for gold' and 'listening to an argument' gains added force in view of the fact that these activities would *not* be opposed according to (Adeimantus' characterization of) Homer and Hesiod, who recommend justice in material terms. Yet insofar as Hesiod's argument involves redirecting the energies of Perses from ultimately unprofitable pursuits, Socrates' audience here cast him as

¹⁴⁹ It is perhaps for this fundamental contrast that Iron and Bronze are put in one class as 'producers' in the 'noble lie'. The primary division there, between the top two classes and the rest of the city, means that in Book 8, the compound 'money-making' class weighs equally against the Gold and Silver types.

¹⁵⁰ An unusual focus on money is evident not only (and somewhat implausibly) as the main cause of decline between stages, but also in the fact that an 'oligarchy' should be rule by the few, but Socrates treats it as rule by the wealthy. On the 'plutocracy', see Schofield (2006) 102–5.

Perses. It seems that the basic idea of Socrates as rival to ‘Hesiod’¹⁵¹ is, in terms of didactic authority, hardly yet constructed when it is deconstructed.

Or rather, more subtly reconstructed. Since Plato has Socrates narrate the whole dialogue, Thrasymachus’ digs at his authority are, no less than those from the Muses, within Socrates’ own speech. Charting the ups and downs of Socrates’ didactic status¹⁵² encourages both interlocutors and readers to think actively about what is required for humans to progress in understanding, and transforms the Hesiodic point of comparison from the hectoring pose into a self-consciously provisional didactic authority. Moreover, unlike Protagoras, Socrates prompts Glaucon to agree that their primary goal is *self*-education rather than instruction of farmers, navigators or generals (*Rep.* 527e: in the context, one reminiscent of the *Works and Days*, of proposing to teach the guardians knowledge of the seasons). It is relevant here to recall that the *Republic* is unique among the Platonic dialogues as the only dialogue narrated by Socrates which ends without a return to the external narrative frame – at 621d3, Socrates is still exhorting Glaucon to virtue, rather than narrating his trip to the Piraeus to an unnamed auditor.¹⁵³ Such a break-off encourages readers to carry on the process of self-improvement beyond the dialogue.

On this account, Socrates’ repeated use of the metallic races achieves more than correcting Hesiod or expressing sympathy with his view on particular points. On the level of method, it picks up the races reinvented *within* the *Works and Days* as a dichotomy between two communities. More broadly, it points to Hesiod as a model for the repeated reconfiguration of ideas within an urgent ethical argument, identifying in the *Works and Days* and *Theogony*

¹⁵¹ Compare Socrates’ implicit revision of Hesiod’s notion of competition. Socrates argues that in any branch of expertise, an expert will try to outdo those unlike him, the non-experts, rather than his fellow practitioners (*Rep.* 349b–50c), as is asserted by *WD* 25–6 (‘potter vies with potter’, κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτῆει), recalled by κεραμεὺς κεραμεύς at *Rep.* 421a2. Cf. Boys-Stones (2010) 46–8 on *Lysis* 215c–d.

¹⁵² Ferrari (2010) emphasizes the extent to which the writer Plato has Socrates as a character taken by surprise at structurally significant points in the *Republic*.

¹⁵³ K. Morgan (2004) 361. Socrates is the internal primary narrator also in the *Charmides*, *Lysis* and the (probably non-Platonic) *Lovers*, all retaining in conclusion an element of the original first-person frame.

a proto-philosophical method to make relevant for contemporary thinkers. Through Socrates' use of 'Hesiodic' Muses, revealed to be those of philosophy, Plato signals his interest in rewriting Hesiod's *multiple* articulations of the 'world as it is' as epistemological self-consciousness in the service of progression towards ethical truth.

This view of the *Works and Days* perhaps resolves in some measure an enduring debate among scholars of the *Republic*, concerning the extent to which this dialogue is genuinely self-revisionary or 'dialectical' in its exhortation towards justice.¹⁵⁴ With Socrates' Hesiod in view, the evolutionary reading of the *Republic* is not incompatible with appreciation of its strong ethical thrust.

It may be objected that the *Republic* is not a particularly good example of repetition and variation towards a single argumentative goal, for this dialogue contains many projects besides the definition of justice.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, this point lies at the heart of another long-standing debate, going at least as far back as Proclus, about whether the *Republic* is ultimately concerned with individual ethics or with communal politics.¹⁵⁶ The *Statesman* might be a better example of an argument offering multiple approaches to the same topic,¹⁵⁷ although this dialogue too is 'about' more than politics. Certainly, the overtly self-correcting aspect of the *Statesman* will be important in the analysis to follow. However, the *Works and Days* itself as a model of argument is arguably better applied to the *Republic* than to the *Statesman*, since Hesiod's poem too argues for and meditates on more than justice, and this too is directed to both communities and individuals. It is the *Republic* that first reveals the breadth of argumentative potential in Hesiod's γέννη and so provides the

¹⁵⁴ Roochnik (2003) takes the 'dialectical' view to extremes; see Rowe (2006) 9 for a critique.

¹⁵⁵ Schofield (2000) 202–3 puts it vividly: the *Republic* offers radical critique of Greek cultural norms – beliefs about gods, heroes, chance, erotic courtship, medical and judicial practice – 'as though Plato is saying: if you want to think properly about justice, think radical thoughts about everything else first'.

¹⁵⁶ Proclus *On the Republic* 7.9–8.6 cited in Schofield (2006) 30.

¹⁵⁷ Rowe (1996) 155 finds the *Statesman* 'single-minded' in its organization – but cf. Merrill (2003).

foundations on which they may truly be recalled in the Platonic corpus as ‘Hesiod’s races and your own’.¹⁵⁸

3.4 Further experiments: the *Statesman*

If the *Republic* presents the most explicit appropriations of ‘Hesiod’s races’ in the Platonic corpus, their use in the *Statesman* is one of the most obscure. In the *Republic*, Socrates’ repetition and modification of the ethical project of the *Works and Days* is overt – in this respect, it is analogous to Aratus’ *Phaenomena*, discussed in the [next chapter](#). In the *Statesman*, by contrast, a strange myth of cosmic reversal is the radically de-familiarizing context for more jumbled allusions to Hesiod’s races amid elements reminiscent of Empedocles and comic poets. If there existed minimal criteria for applying the ‘Hesiodic’ label to a narrative project in Plato, the framework of the Elean Stranger’s myth seems to challenge the reader to identify them. Not to omit this challenge, then, the final major section of this chapter is devoted to the myth and its context in the *Statesman*.

Among the many studies of the myth’s implicit and explicit questioning of the traditional ‘life under Cronus’ as an ideal, few have explicitly articulated the (or a) point of identifying, let alone evaluating, the specific strands of its poetic texture beyond the three apparently separate myths mentioned by the narrator himself as backgrounds, in its introduction (Atreus, Cronus and the earth-born, 268e–269b). One exception is concerned with the overall epistemological effect; it is judged that poetic echoes other than those of the Stranger’s philosophical background (understood as Eleatic) invite doubts about the myth’s truth by comparison with the rest of the argument.¹⁵⁹ According to another, recent argument,

¹⁵⁸ τὰ Ἡσιόδου τε καὶ τὰ παρ’ ὑμῖν γένη (*Rep.* 547a1) is usually translated ‘Hesiod’s races and your own’ (cf. e.g. Grube and Reeve, with *LSJ* s.v. παρὰ) presumably referring to Socrates’ *knowing* construction of the ‘noble lie’. Such translations assume that Plato is appropriating Hesiod on some level. By contrast, Solmsen (1962), arguing Plato’s *limited* use of Hesiod’s myth (n. 32 above), translates (183) ‘the races which you have distinguished in conformity with Hesiod’.

¹⁵⁹ McCabe (2000) 155: ‘by reminding the reader insistently of the origins of the story in the ideas of other poets and thinkers (notably other than Eleatic thinkers) the [Elean Stranger] insulates its content from the direct argument, and invites us to wonder whether the story can be true’.

the correct understanding of the *Statesman* myth itself depends on recalling contemporary satire attached to the 'age of Cronus', as well as Plato's willingness to 'correct' Hesiod's account of the Golden race in the *Republic* and elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ My own concern is with the broader didactic project of the dialogue, but I find a positive broad methodological result. Focusing on allusions to Hesiod in particular, both within the myth (section 3.4a) and beyond it (sections 3.4b and 3.4c), I shall contend that they encourage consideration of how topics as such emerge from the interplay of different modes of argument in the *Statesman* – mythical and 'anti-mythical' narratives, question and answer, formal divisions and self-conscious analogies. Aspects of Hesiod's own presentation of the races *and* his wider work are transformed into themes of 'philosophical' interest in their own right, such as the idea of decline (3.4a) and the nature of a γένος (3.4b), as well as the authority to approach and communicate the truth (3.4c), so crucial in citizen-management.¹⁶¹

In this respect, the more radical experiment with the setting of Hesiod's races in the *Statesman* develops those of the *Republic*, but the substitution of the Elean Stranger for Socrates encourages reflection on the very construction of a didactic persona,¹⁶² an issue that will come uppermost in Chapter 6, especially in relation to Juvenal. Preliminary thoughts in relation to Plato's spokesmen will be found in the conclusion to the current chapter. First, however, I shall show how echoes of Hesiod draw attention to narratorial control of a story. This theme will be central to my discussion (ch. 5) of the use of Hesiod in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

3.4a Narrative direction and the idea of decline

In order to understand the use of Hesiod in the *Statesman*, it is important to emphasize that neither the myth within the *Statesman* nor the *Statesman* within Plato's corpus is presented as free-standing. The dialogue itself, dramatically and methodologically

¹⁶⁰ El Murr (2010) 287–97 – see section 3.4a below.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Lane (1998) 202: 'method and politics become one'.

¹⁶² Cf. first Blondell (2002) ch. 6.

constructed as following on the introduction of the Elean Stranger in the *Sophist*, can be understood as the centre of an apparently incomplete trilogy of exercises in definition, covering the sophist, the statesman (πολιτικός) and the philosopher [probably never written] (*Soph.* 217a).¹⁶³ Additionally, although a new interlocutor, ‘Young Socrates’, is introduced in the *Statesman*, the framing conversation with Theodorus, teacher of Theaetetus, situates this discussion, like that of the *Sophist*, as taking place one day after that of the *Theaetetus*, itself dramatically situated just before Socrates’ trial on a charge of corrupting the young.¹⁶⁴ The *Statesman*’s thematic and compositional connections to these and other Platonic works have long been a focus of interpretations.¹⁶⁵

In political thought, it has been observed, the *Statesman* sits between the *Republic* and the *Laws*.¹⁶⁶ But the constitutional terms emerge only after a series of discussions regarding the proper method of going about a definition, in the midst of which the Elean Stranger introduces his cosmological myth as a corrective (‘we must travel some other route’: ἑτέραν ὁδὸν πορευομένην τινα *St.* 268d5–6) to the initial strategy of identifying the function of statesmanship by systematically demarcating both the art itself and that which it governs. The myth of a divine statesman, summarized below, helps the participants to realize why this was a ‘false start’¹⁶⁷ – they realize belatedly that the statesman, unlike a divine herdsman, is of the same breed as his flock. They then proceed to re-classify more cautiously, reflecting as they go on the use of didactic models and other images in pinning down the nature of political expertise.

The place of the story near the start of the dialogue, at 268d–74e, is relatively unusual among Platonic myths.¹⁶⁸ It does, however, correspond to that of the ‘noble lie’ in the *Republic* and also of

¹⁶³ Morgan (2000) 260 compares the larger project spanning *Timaeus*, *Critias* [incomplete], [*Hermocrates* – never written].

¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Miller (1980) reads *Sophist* and *Statesman* as Socrates’ properly ‘philosophical trial’.

¹⁶⁵ On the relation to *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, see Rowe (1995). Sayre (2006) and White (2007) treat the dialogue’s relation to the metaphysics of *Philebus* in particular.

¹⁶⁶ See recently Kahn (2009). ¹⁶⁷ Schofield (2006) 165.

¹⁶⁸ Kahn (2009) 148 – his nearest comparison is the centrally positioned myth of the *Phaedrus*.

Protagoras' Great Speech in the *Protagoras*, both of which are reference points for some modern interpretations of the Elean Stranger's story (see below). Like the 'noble lie', the Elean Stranger's story is a premise for the following discussion. Given that Hesiod's 'myth of the races' a little way into the *Works and Days* is appropriated by Aratus' *Phaenomena* and his Latin translators as a 'second proem',¹⁶⁹ and its position is apparently imitated also in Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, it may not be a coincidence that already in Plato, the stories making most prominent use of Hesiod's races occur at similar points in their respective dialogues. In the *Statesman*, above all, the positioning both enables correction of what has preceded the myth and allows room for critique of the myth itself. Developing the point emerging from study of the *Republic*, I shall argue that the potential for the deliberate presentation of an alternative or a correction is an important part of what Hesiod represented for Plato.

The story that the Elean Stranger tells Young Socrates to illustrate the ideal statesman is, like Socrates' 'noble lie', self-consciously bizarre. He presents his account as a sort of anti-myth, the unknown truth behind three separate myths: the portent for Atreus of the temporary reversal of the heavenly course; the kingship of Cronus; and the earthborn race. At one time 'the god' (ὁ θεός *St.* 269c4) steers the universe; at other times he 'lets it go' (ἀνῆκεν 269c5) and of its own accord (αὐτόματος 269c7) it revolves in the opposite direction. During the former period, minor divinities, δαίμονες, are personally in charge of human affairs. By contrast, when the cosmos revolves by itself, it at first manages well, but gradually becomes ever more forgetful of its divine creator's 'teaching' (διδασχὴν 273b2). On the human level, lacking direct divine care, we have been compensated with technical knowledge to help us survive among animals gone wild (274c5–d2), since humans must look after their own needs 'just like the world order as a whole' (καθάπερ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος 274d6–7). Such is the present era, said to be the time of Zeus (τόνδε δ' ὄν λόγος ἐπὶ Διὸς εἶναι, τὸν νυνὶ 272b2), whereas the legendary 'reign of Cronus', in which the earth sent up everything of its own accord

¹⁶⁹ Maurach (1978) 148 on Germanicus.

(αὐτομάτης ἀναδιδούσης τῆς γῆς 272a4–5), corresponds (on most readings) to the era of rotation in the opposite direction, in which men ‘grow’ backwards, born from the earth fully grown with grey hair (270d6–271c2).

This summary of the story is made possible only by omitting much from the second half of the account, whose difficulty is not to be underestimated. Some scholars have been troubled by the theological implications of describing the current operation of the universe as contrary to that of a world under divine rule, as it is presented e.g. in Plato’s *Timaeus*.¹⁷⁰ They have therefore wrestled with the question of whether the Elean Stranger’s μῦθος describes a two-stage or a three-stage rotation of the cosmos in which the world undergoes a period of upheaval (described at 272d6–73a4) between two god-directed periods of rotation.¹⁷¹ There are also revealing variations between the three-stage accounts proposed;¹⁷² there is as yet no consensus about the main target of the story.¹⁷³ Besides, those arguing for two stages are not always consistent about the extent of the break between the ages of Cronus and of Zeus (and therefore whether the current race of Athenians can claim ‘autochthonous’ ancestry at all).¹⁷⁴ It is fair to say that every account of the myth involves an awkward reading of the text at some point, or at least one that requires very careful argument.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ McCabe (2000) 143 n. 10. For a book-length treatment of the relevant texts, see Carone (2005).

¹⁷¹ See e.g. McCabe (1997) and Lane (1998) versus Rowe (1995).

¹⁷² That of Lovejoy and Boas (1935), defended by Brisson (1974) and Brisson (1995), differs from that of Rowe (1995) in connecting reverse ageing to the time of Cronus’ rule.

¹⁷³ E.g. Carone (2004) argues for three stages on the basis of political rather than theological optimism. Rowe (2010) emphasizes the story’s deflation of Athenian pride in autochthony. Zuckert (2009) 708–9 notes that it undermines the Homeric political leader (‘shepherd of the people’).

¹⁷⁴ Lane (1998) 106 emphasizes discontinuity, taking it that ‘our ancestors’, i.e. the first to reproduce sexually, not earthborn, ‘came into being’ (ἐφύοντο) at the start of the current rotation (271b2). Yet she also refers (107) to the remnant surviving the turnaround. It seems to me that in the context, ἐφύοντο in reference to those at the start of the present period is better translated as ‘grew up’ (i.e. no longer ‘growing’ backward – on such people’s lack of memory, hence of ancestry, see Ferrari (1995)).

¹⁷⁵ As Rowe (1995) 192 admits on *Statesman* 271d1–2, ‘the movement (φορά) that now obtains’ on his interpretation has to cover two contrary movements – the end of the phase of reverse movement and its following prompt by the god to move forward again. The three-stage account also complicates by positing two kinds of earthborn men, but the two-stage account struggles with 272e1–3 (the earthborn race ‘falling to the ground as seed’) – on this phrase, see Carone (2004) 95.

Interpretations should acknowledge, therefore, that whichever position one takes, the precise way in which the alternating eras of 'forward' and 'reverse' rotation work is not *immediately* obvious from the Elean Stranger's account.¹⁷⁶ This fact is acknowledged within the narrative; Young Socrates requires clarification as to where exactly the mythical 'age of Cronus' fits into the new picture ('was it in those turnings or in these?' *πότερον ἐν ἐκείναις ἢν ταῖς τροπαῖς ἢ ἐν ταῖσδε* 271c5). His confusion must stem from the fact that the manner in which the Elean Stranger narrates the story is not straightforward. The narrative stops and starts and repeatedly goes back to pick up threads from earlier on, e.g. 272d4–6: 'we must now state that *for the sake of which* we roused our story into action, in order to move forward and bring what follows to its end' (*οὗ δ' ἔνεκα τὸν μῦθον ἡγείραμεν, τοῦτο λεκτέον, ἵνα τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν περαίνωμεν*) or 273e4–6: 'what has been said, then, is the end-point of everything; as for what is relevant to our showing the nature of the king, it is sufficient if we take up the account from what went before' (*τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τέλος ἀπάντων εἴρηται· τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπόδειξιν ἱκανὸν ἐκ τοῦ πρόσθεν ἀπτομένοις τοῦ λόγου*). On one level, this is in keeping with the very idea of 'forward' and 'reverse' cosmic movement;¹⁷⁷ it is important to emphasize that the *μῦθος* itself plays with the idea of teleology.¹⁷⁸ But for the listener, the Elean Stranger's insistence on 'moving onward' to the goal (*τέλος*) of his own account (i.e. the one functional to the immediate, dialectical context)¹⁷⁹ keeps it ostentatiously unsynchronized with the cosmic cycles he is describing (which is one cause of the disagreement among modern scholars about which parts of the cycle are resurrected for more detail). His approach to storytelling makes a game out of the idea of *narrative* direction.

¹⁷⁶ Rowe (2010) 312 suggests that Plato 'is positively inviting his readers to misinterpret the story'.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. also 274b1–2, e1, 275a9–10, with Tomasi (1990) 351 on the narrative 'jerks' as Plato 'joining in his own game'.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Morgan (2010) on teleological questions arising from the *Timaeus* cosmology as a narrative.

¹⁷⁹ McCabe (2000) 148 n. 38: this 'resumptive technique' draws the focus away from the past towards life now.

A comparison with the story in Hesiod helps to focus this observation. In the *Works and Days*, the sequence is emphasized through the ordinals introducing the successive races: πρώτιστα ... δεύτερον ... τρίτον ... τέταρτον ... πέμπτοισι. By contrast, the cosmic cycles and convoluted style of the *Statesman* myth effectively undo the step-wise succession from ‘then’ to ‘now’. The merits of a two-stage or a three-stage interpretation of the Elean Stranger’s story continue to be debated,¹⁸⁰ including the effect of Hesiodic echoes (on which see below), but what I am concerned to emphasize first is that it is not the eventual interpretation but the difficulty of following the story (evident by comparison with Hesiod’s narrative) which works to expose the potential for a new kind of interrogation of the content of archaic hexameters.¹⁸¹

Let us now consider the allusions to Hesiod’s own account of the races within the Elean Stranger’s construction of his story. Although modern scholars have noted several echoes of Hesiod’s narrative, the implications of their combined effect have not been pursued beyond the question of *Plato’s* attitude to the ‘Hesiodic’ image of the life under Cronus (variously invoked as a premise for and as a deduction from the shape of the myth in the *Statesman*).¹⁸² But, although the motif of nourishment αὐτόματα in the ‘life under Cronus’ (271d1, e4, 272a4, 274c2) may bring Hesiod to mind, it surely refers in the first instance to its development in Old Comedy (Young Socrates: ‘we’ve heard about it from a great many’, 269b1).¹⁸³ That is, on its own, this theme is not enough to prove that Hesiod is the main target of the Elean Stranger’s scepticism

¹⁸⁰ Recently, El Murr (2010) defends the two-stage account while Rowe (2010) in the same volume defends his three-stage interpretation.

¹⁸¹ Rowe (2010) 302 points out that the Platonic version makes ‘philosophical’ improvements to Hesiod’s account, in that it explains things that there happen for no particular reason. We find this also in Roman poets; see below, pp. 198 (n. 124) and 245–7. For El Murr (2011), the τέλος of a μῦθος recalls *Iliad* 19.107.

¹⁸² For the former (with reference to the *Republic*), see El Murr (2010); for the latter, Rowe (2010). Rowe does address some implications of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ lenses on the mythical legacy.

¹⁸³ Baldry (1953) 50 points out that αὐτόματος occurs in all but two of the citations in Athenaeus’ *Professors at Dinner* concerning the comic poets’ writings ‘on the life long ago’.

about the happiness of the nurslings in the time under Cronus (272b–d), let alone Plato's.

Rather, we should prioritize the unambiguously and specifically Hesiodic echoes, beginning with the very first detail given about the men in the 'opposite period'; their reverse ageing, a process in which the white hairs of old men become black (τῶν ... πρεσβυτέρων αἱ λευκαὶ τρίχες ἐμελαίνοντο 270e1–2) and the people become like new-born children 'both in mind and in body' (κατὰ τε τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα 270e7). It has long been observed that the specific detail of the hair makes literal the portent of the grey-haired¹⁸⁴ babies envisioned for the future at *WD* 181. In addition, however, I find a verbal recollection of the childish dependence of Hesiod's Silver men, 'like the Golden [race] neither in body nor in mind' (*WD* 129). Given these echoes, it is more than probable that the fate of Hesiod's mighty and self-destructive Bronze race, who went to Hades nameless (νόνημοι *WD* 154), is echoed in the Stranger's emphasis in the next sentence: these creatures wasted away until they totally disappeared (κομιδῇ τὸ πάμπαν ἐξηφανίζετο *St.* 270e8–9), and this process of becoming invisible (ἄδηλον 271a1) was particularly rapid for those who died a violent death at that time (270e9–71a2). At this point, the Stranger turns to explain how this fate of reverse ageing was able to be reported as an 'earthborn' race by 'our first ancestors' (τῶν ἡμετέρων προγόνων τῶν πρώτων *St.* 271a8–9), born from the earth but literally pivotal, bordering on the age of Zeus and surviving long enough to reproduce sexually. There may well be a hint here of Hesiod's race of heroes, glossed as the προτέρη γενεή before our own (*WD* 160); at any rate, recollection of how some fortunate heroes were transported to the Blessed Isles (*WD* 167–73) seems to be the only justification for the Stranger's apparently unnecessary caveat that the fate of reverse ageing in the counter-normal epoch applies to 'all those whom god did not take off to another destiny'. I read this as a series of

¹⁸⁴ On Plato's choice of 'white' as colour term here, see Rowe (2010) 301 n. 13 – and indeed, when the Elean Stranger no longer needs to make the point about reverse ageing, he refers to the reverse-agers as 'those born from the earth grey-haired' (πολιὰ φύντα 273e11).

allusions to the most memorable features of Hesiod’s Silver, Bronze, Heroic and Iron races;¹⁸⁵ the question to ask then is about their cumulative effect in the present narrative.

In effect, the Elean Stranger in the *Statesman* has glossed every one of Hesiod’s post-Golden races as a truncated life. If the γένος in which they are combined is then ascribed to the age of Cronus, as the two-stage interpretation and the majority of the three-stage accounts argue, they become associated with the motif of spontaneous (αὐτόματα) growth.¹⁸⁶ At *this* point it is legitimate to have in focus the lives of Hesiod’s Golden men. Given that in Hesiod the grey-haired babies are the most prominent symptom of forthcoming doom (anticipated by the childish Silver race), we would then have the audacious transferral of an apocalyptic motif to the beginning of Hesiod’s human history.¹⁸⁷ Such startlingly specific and disparate allusions to *all* Hesiod’s races in the course of the Elean Stranger’s description of the age of Cronus function, then, as clues to the fact that the succession of races from the *Works and Days* has been radically disordered, in a poetic ‘confirmation’ of the fact that the very idea of decline is here deconstructed.¹⁸⁸

By contrast with the first part of the Elean Stranger’s account, the poetic texture of his description of the so-called ‘age of Zeus’ has barely been unpicked. Although there are possibilities here for structural correspondence with the latter stages of Hesiod’s five-

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 306 and n. 28 refers in passing to the use of certain such ‘Hesiodic’ elements, but comments only that for Plato there is presumably a rationale which is lacking in Hesiod. E.g. he speculates that the few escapees managed to live philosophical lives despite their condition of increasing childhood.

¹⁸⁶ The first use of αὐτόματων in the story, at 269c7, is the cosmos’ revolving ‘backwards’ when left to itself – a point in favour of Rowe’s three-stage interpretation. Still, the idea of grey-haired babies growing up younger in a rotation guided by divinity retrospectively makes literal sense of the Stranger’s rather odd phrasing in introducing the cosmic cycles – the world is said to ‘acquire life once more and receive a restored immortality from its craftsman’ (270a4–5) – and suggests a similar irony in his concluding use of a traditional collocation, ‘immortal and ageless’ (ἀθάνατον . . . καὶ ἀγήρων 273e4), to describe the world when the god holds the tiller again (i.e. another period in which humans never ‘grow older’).

¹⁸⁷ I wonder if in this context we should see a satirical reminder that in *Hesiod’s* vision of the life under Cronus, humans did not suffer old age (*WD* 113–14).

¹⁸⁸ Reverse ageing still effects a collapse of the Hesiodic sequence if it is ascribed to a period of commotion between two god-directed periods of forward rotation. It has more force, however, if it works directly to undermine the traditional ‘life under Cronus’, to which Plato’s attitude is agreed (by scholars on both sides of the debate) to be thoroughly ambiguous. See El Murr (2010) with further bibliography, and Rowe (2010) 303 n. 21.

part human history,¹⁸⁹ the main Hesiodic allusion, evidently mediated through fifth-century cultural histories,¹⁹⁰ is found in the brief reference to Prometheus' gift of fire to mankind (*St.* 274c5–d1). In both Hesiodic versions and in the *Statesman* (but not in the *Protagoras*, on which see [section 3.4b](#) below), this appears as a story of technological progress which compensates mankind for the loss of divine care. On the face of it, the Hesiodic background of Zeus's *hostility* to mankind adds force to the two-stage interpretation of the *Statesman* myth, according to which the age of Zeus is an analogy for the era in which humans, along with the cosmos, must look after themselves. However, the Stranger's convoluted narration makes it unclear exactly where or how the period of technological advance should be mapped on to his account of the cosmos left to itself and increasingly forgetful of the divine commands (273a–4c).

The difficulty in mapping one myth onto the timescale of another (the explicit problem with which the Elean Stranger begins at 268e) is a problem familiar to scholars of Hesiod's myths of Prometheus and of the races (see [2.2](#) above). However, I wonder whether the interaction of physical and mythological layers of narration in the Stranger's account may draw inspiration from Empedocles, through whom Hesiod's image of the Golden Age, at least, is mediated. Empedocles is in the first instance a target of critique in the *Statesman*: the Elean Stranger, explaining his view that the movement of an intelligent but corporeal universe must be governed by a single god periodically controlling its rotation, emphasizes the undesirability of positing two separate divinities in mutual opposition (270a1–2) and thereby clearly takes aim at Empedocles' system of cosmic cycles governed alternately by Love and Strife.¹⁹¹ On the

¹⁸⁹ Miller (1980) 39–49 finds the two-part age of Zeus (*St.* 273c4–d4) analogous to Hesiod's sequence of Heroes and Iron age. Indeed, the emphasis on the present (272b2) begins to sound like the era of Hesiod's Iron men as the Elean Stranger describes the gradual decline into 'unlikeness'. In my view, however, thematic echoes, such as they are, point to Hesiod's description of the two-part Iron era.

¹⁹⁰ See Cole (1967).

¹⁹¹ See Pierris (2005) for a collection of articles on the interpretation of Empedocles' cosmology. On Plato's view of Empedocles, see O'Brien (1997), and for Empedoclean echoes in the *Statesman* myth other than the notion of cosmic cycles, Kahn (2009) 151. The 'combination' of colours in the 'image' at *St.* 277 may recall Empedocles (DK 31 B23): Wright (1995), commenting on her fr. 15 (=23 DK), refers to our passage.

other hand, those cycles provide positive inspiration for the basic idea of the Elean Stranger's story (the impression of their symmetry has been cited in support of the two-stage interpretation),¹⁹² and the Stranger's image of the reign of Cronus has in common with Empedocles' description of the rule of Cypris an emphasis on harmony between humans and animals (*St.* 272b10–c6; cf. DK 31 B130).

Now, I am persuaded by Lane that the 'cosmological scaffolding', in which the Elean Stranger speaks of 'the god' and his absence, and the mythological presentation (the so-called ages of Cronus and Zeus) are two different perspectives on the same phenomenon, employed in turn to bring different issues into focus for Young Socrates.¹⁹³ It is striking, then, that a similar combination of the language of physical 'roots' and that of morality (in reference to the lifecycle of the daemon) is a longstanding cause of confusion in the interpretation of Empedocles' poem. The publication of the Strasbourg papyrus (adding to Empedocles DK 31 B17) in 1999, containing passages formerly attributed to two separate poems, 'Physics' and 'Purifications', has strengthened arguments for the unity of Empedocles' poem on nature, leading to the consensus that Empedocles' descriptions of a daemon's successive reincarnations and of the bigger cosmic pattern are in some sense compatible and not merely analogous.¹⁹⁴ Yet questions persist in the reconstruction of his system, not only because of the fragmentary nature of Empedocles' text but also because of the way in which it veers between these different levels of narration.¹⁹⁵

Such a warning, I think, is one methodological benefit of thinking about Empedocles in the background of the Elean Stranger's narration. Someone determined to enlist Empedoclean echoes in support of a clear interpretation of the *Statesman* myth might argue

¹⁹² Kahn (2009) 150, citing the allusion to Empedocles at *Soph.* 242e5–43a1.

¹⁹³ Lane (1998) 104. El Murr (2010) 294 n. 39 points out the complexity of the Stranger's repeated use of *vũv* to refer to our era within the myth, let alone the dramatic present of the narration.

¹⁹⁴ See especially Laks (2005). Osborne (1987) argued the case for unity before the discovery of the papyrus.

¹⁹⁵ See C. Osborne (2005) for an argument focused on this point, and Warren (2007) 141–51 for a clear overview of the possibilities. On the transitions between the phases, see Sedley (2005) 352.

that the discovery of the Strasbourg papyrus suggests we should correspondingly rethink the ways in which the two kinds of terminology in the Elean Stranger's cosmological narration could be mapped into one system (i.e. a version of the three-stage view in which Cronus is another name for the demiurge), but my point here is a more basic one: that Empedocles can be cited not merely as a target of critique or even in simple support of the two-stage interpretation, but as one precedent for the story's multi-layered and allusive presentation.

How does this more detailed account of the Elean Stranger's use of Hesiod and Empedocles affect our understanding of the dialogue's core function? Attention to the form of the narrative may prompt the realization that the myth is not an isolated instance of engagement with Hesiod's text in the *Statesman*. Renewed attention to the Elean Stranger's myth in its argumentative context will reveal in this dialogue a kind of response to Hesiod's wider narrative that goes well beyond a challenge to the 'life under Cronus' as an ideal.

3.4b *The nature of a γένος*

The challenge itself is certainly striking. After describing the material prosperity and comfort of those who lived under the direct rule of divinity, the Elean Stranger breaks off to ask Young Socrates whether he could evaluate the happiness of that former period, the 'age of Cronus', in comparison with the age of Zeus, 'the present one, [with which] you are familiar from personal experience' (272b2–3). When Young Socrates declines to judge, the Elean Stranger suggests that the proper criterion for happiness should be the presence of philosophical activity (272b8–d1) – did the creatures in the age of Cronus use their leisure-time and ability to talk with animals to philosophize, or did they spend it in feasting and recounting to each other 'stories (μύθους) of the sort that even now are told about them'?¹⁹⁶ And he rather deliberately lays aside

¹⁹⁶ On the possible irony here, given the current myth-making, cf. McCabe (2000) 154–9 and ch. 8, and Rosen (1995) 56.

the question (ὅμως δ’ οὖν ταῦτα μὲν ἀφῶμεν 272d1–2) to get on with his narrative.

In so questioning the tradition of the ‘life under Cronus’,¹⁹⁷ Plato opens the way for many other writers from Dicaearchus to Lucian. Ovid and Juvenal, in particular, are examined in later chapters of this book. In its immediate context in the *Statesman*, however, the depiction of humanity in that period highlights the fact that the dialogue has already scrutinized the human γένος from an entirely (and deliberately) synchronic perspective, in the initial strategy of identifying the function of the statesman by dividing every result down the middle. Having steered Young Socrates away from the partisan (mis)perception of human ‘nobility’ in trying to distinguish ‘man’ from ‘beast’,¹⁹⁸ the Elean Stranger has pointedly divided the ‘family classes’¹⁹⁹ of living beings such that humans emerged as a ‘family-class . . . which has run together with the most noble and also most easy-going class of existing things’ (266c4–6); that is, with the pig.²⁰⁰ The next set of divisions realigned man with the bird, as a ‘featherless biped’. The upshot of the Elean Stranger’s bifurcations is, in Miller’s words, to ‘turn *away* from what is unique and essential to man’ – the faculty of reasoning, τὸ λογιστικόν – ‘and *to* what, regarded merely as animals, they share’.²⁰¹ This is precisely the focus of the Elean Stranger’s response to Young Socrates’ frustrated question concerning the nature of a γένος (‘how is one to see more clearly, that class and part (γένος καὶ μέρος) are not the same but different (ἕτερον) from each other?’ 263a2–4). The reply (delayed until 285a8–b6) is that γένος is, depending on viewpoint, a selected or collected group of things ‘related’ (οἰκεῖα) ‘in their forms’ (ἐν εἴδεσι).

¹⁹⁷ On the ambiguities of the ‘Golden Age’ in the *Statesman*, cf. first Vidal-Naquet (1978), who points out that in the *Gorgias* myth, the justice of the Age of Zeus compares favourably with that of Cronus.

¹⁹⁸ Miller (1980) 21 notes that the categories are ‘uninformative’: ‘not-man’ does not illuminate ‘man’ in the way that the proper sub-class of mortals ‘female’ illuminates ‘male’.

¹⁹⁹ Rowe (1995) 5–6 explains his choice of this term to render γέννη.

²⁰⁰ This results from a joke about powers of two and four ‘feet’; cf. Sprague (1994) 54–5 on puns in Plato.

²⁰¹ Miller (1980) 31 – his italics. Near the end of the myth, too, humans are selected only as one group from among ‘the other beasts’ (τῶν ἄλλων θηρίων 274b2), even as the Elean Stranger prepares to focus on the development of the human life (274d2).

This synchronic approach to identifying a proper γένος is in stark contrast with the notion of γένος in Hesiod, which, as has twice been noted in this book, covers both 'race' and 'era'. Indeed, the sequential presentation of races in the *Works and Days* eventually seems to allot a race to the age, rather than vice versa, as if every *era* must have its own identity. In the *Statesman*, the synchronic and diachronic facets of Hesiod's races seem to be explored separately, in a more extreme form than in *Republic* 3 and 8. Like the Elean Stranger's initial classifications, his myth of the reversed cosmos aims to explain the entire corpus of experience.²⁰² On one level, the act of viewing humans from a novel and distant perspective is enough to render them comparable to animals – think of how the myth of the *Phaedo* begins by viewing humanity from far above as dotted around the Mediterranean like ants or frogs around a swamp (*Phaedo* 109b). But in the context of the *Statesman*, the point is to reveal how the world would look if the human γένος were considered synchronically;²⁰³ when the human is defined as a herd animal, it exposes the fact that Young Socrates has bought into the traditional Homeric image of a leader as 'shepherd of the people', while the traditional amoral vision of the Golden γένος is recast as much more a 'city of pigs' than the one so labelled by Glaucon in the *Republic*.²⁰⁴

With this emphasis in view, and given echoes both of Hesiod's text and of the preceding argument in the *Statesman*, the presence of speaking animals in the community ruled by Cronus (*St.* 272b–c) seems to develop the provocation in the *Works and Days* to compare and contrast the interactions of animals with those of

²⁰² Solmsen (1962) 180 describes it as 'dialectical genealogy'. McCabe (2000) 144 n. 18 suggests that the fact that the Elean Stranger presents a world 'divided' among divine powers in the age of Cronus might be a 'heavy joke about collection and division'.

²⁰³ Benardete (1963) 203: 'the myth gives the conditions under which [the previous] diaeresis would be true'. Socrates in *Republic* 3 is open to his interlocutors about making the inverse transfer between myth and argument; Protagoras in his Great Speech is not.

²⁰⁴ See Barney (2001) 223 on the preoccupations shared by the *Statesman* myth and what Glaucon called 'city of pigs'. Given Socrates' silent presence, it is tempting to find a teasing Platonic self-reference back to the *Republic*'s 'noble lie' in the Elean Stranger's assertion that 'no one has told the origin [of the autochthony story] before' (*St.* 269b9–c1). Miller (1980) 48 notes that the 'noble lie' similarly insisted on the superiority of the rulers to the ruled.

humans. I call it a provocation because while the story of the hawk and the nightingale, directly following on from the account of the Iron race, invites Perses and the kings to connect the ‘justice’ apparent in each image, Hesiod’s exhortation to justice later emphatically separates human justice from the behaviour of ‘fish and beasts and birds’ (*WD* 276–80). Hesiod in warning mood foresees the hawkish justice of ‘might is right’ as the grim reality we can expect in the future (δίκη . . . ἐν χερσὶ *WD* 192), whereas his firm distinction of humans from animals on the basis of Zeus’s gift of justice is the climax of his (idealizing?) exhortation to Perses and the kings (see above [ch. 2](#)). The Elean Stranger’s depiction of the human ‘herd’ could be read as making the same point, in an optimistic or pessimistic spirit, from another angle: only in the circumstances of the age of Cronus, which are not our own, would mankind have anything to learn from beasts.²⁰⁵

On the other hand, especially if the race in the age of Zeus has some communal memory of how things were in the age of Cronus,²⁰⁶ the Elean Stranger could be recalling the memory of Hesiod’s pseudo-parainetic hawk and nightingale, or possibly the friendship between humans and animals in Empedocles’ Golden Age, or even the indirect teaching in Heraclitus’ epigram that donkeys prefer garbage to gold (22 DK B9), in order to assert polemically the potential of beasts to make a real contribution to human wisdom. On balance I think this is more likely, given that within the preceding divisions in the *Statesman*, the Elean Stranger posited intelligent cranes as a counter-example of a ‘rational creature’ (φρόνιμον . . . ζῷον 263d4) in order to demonstrate to Young Socrates the *error* of an anthropocentric division of living things – the suggestion is arguably perverse, but the point survives the

²⁰⁵ Men and animals are imagined to ‘get together in conversation’ (διὰ λόγων . . . συγγίνεσθαι 272b10–c1). The language may recall the dialogue’s opening joke about kinship. The interlocutors are both ‘akin’ to Socrates, the one (Theaetetus) in his looks, the other (Young Socrates) in his name; for Socrates, this produces ‘a certain relatedness’ (τινα οἰκειότητα 258a1–2) and we should be eager to ‘recognize’ those ‘akin to us’ (συγγενεῖς 258a2) by talking to them (διὰ λόγων). So perhaps the fact that humans in the age of Cronus speak with animals indicates their essential kinship with brutes. However, Rowe (2010) 299 n. 4, seeking a positive implication of this detail for the life under Cronus, recalls that talking to the animal(s) in *us* is in the *Phaedrus* a condition of the philosophical life.

²⁰⁶ See n. 174 above.

irony; the Elean Stranger, unlike (the elder) Socrates, is academically determined not to focus on what is unique to humans.²⁰⁷

3.4c Nuancing and broadening the approach to truth

It is reasonable at this point to ask why we are at all entitled to look to the larger context in Hesiod. My answer is that the framing of the Elean Stranger's myth recalls that the 'myth of the races' is not a free-standing construction in the *Works and Days*. Hesiod announces a ἕτερον λόγον (*WD* 106), an account in some sense 'alternative' to the story of Prometheus and Pandora. The Elean Stranger's introduction of his story as an 'alternative route' (ἑτέραν ὁδόν *St.* 268d5) is functionally parallel, insofar as, in each text, the alternative is not so much one of content, but of its treatment. In the *Statesman*, the μῦθος represents a marked shift in discursive mode,²⁰⁸ but (as may be presumed for *WD* 106) this is in aid of the same rhetorical goal (as the Elean Stranger puts it, 'not to disgrace the argument' (μὴ . . . καταισχῦναι τὸν λόγον *St.* 268d3)).

Moreover, as with the *Works and Days*, self-consciously different perspectives are exploited for the sake of overall progress in the task at hand. In Hesiod, the announcement of an αἴνος consciously introduces a different kind of speech, after which the speaker moves into more direct forms of argument for justice (and perhaps 'corrects' the αἴνος). In the *Statesman*, too, the discursive mode switches again following the myth, but the didactic project thereafter is informed by the distinctions that have become clear in the interim. Recall that in the *Works and Days*, the 'myth of the races', by bringing out the polarity between δίκη and ὕβρις, provides the opportunity for the speaker to emphasize that Perses can and must choose δίκη. In the *Statesman*, following the fantastic extremes of the μῦθος of cosmic reversal,²⁰⁹ the Elean Stranger is able to identify imprecisions in the initial divisions, regarding the degree

²⁰⁷ Benardete (1963) reveals the inadequacy of a definition that misses the element of desire in identity.

²⁰⁸ In general see e.g. McCabe (2000) 155 on how the self-conscious framing of the μῦθος 'dissociates it from the previous run of argument, and picks the story itself out for inspection and comment'.

²⁰⁹ Nightingale (1996) 87 sees the ages of Cronus and Zeus as, respectively, extremes of dependence and autonomy, of which individuals in the real world are a mixture.

and manner of control held by the statesman over the human γένος (275a3–4).

In fact, despite the Stranger’s exposure of faults in the traditional (Homeric) image of a group leader, aspects of the *Hesiodic* image of the wise man lie behind the participants’ ultimate definition of the statesman. First, after many more divisions and the introduction of an analogy of a weaver, the statesman’s expertise is said to include the ability to adapt to the unexpected ‘things from Zeus’ (*St.* 295d1–2), a thought that strongly recalls the core principle expressed in *WD* 483–4 that ‘the will of Zeus is different at different times, and tricky for mortals to grasp’. Second, the leader’s wisdom turns out to involve mastery of the *καίρος* (*St.* 305d1–4).²¹⁰ This is the knowledge needed by Hesiod’s farmer, who is urged to get to know the ‘days that come from Zeus’ (*WD* 765–828); the concept of ‘the right time’ to perform certain tasks unifies the final instructions of the *Works and Days*.²¹¹ The Elean Stranger, who initially divided mankind in such a way that it appeared on the level of the pig, would appreciate the irony in concluding that his ideal leader has as much in common with Hesiod’s humble farmer as with the Homeric idea of the king.

Having Hesiod in view encourages reflections on whether such didactic variations and clarifications in the approach to truth consciously refer beyond the boundaries of the immediate Platonic dialogue. The debate has arisen in relation to other sections of the *Statesman* – apart from the fact that the whole dialogue follows directly on the project announced in the *Sophist* – such as the discussion about parts of virtue at 306c1, whose formulation has reminded some critics of *Republic* Book 4, others of the *Protagoras*.²¹² A similar process of rethinking and nuancing of the message for different audiences may be tracked through our selected myths. I have already noted (sect. 3.4a) the relatively

²¹⁰ On this term, cf. Lane (1998) 132–6. Recall that in *Republic* Book 8, total knowledge of the *καίρος* is denied to the philosopher-kings – only the Muses know the nuptial number. From this perspective, the Elean Stranger’s concluding image of the ideal statesman, not only the one in the cosmological myth, is indeed that of ‘a god instead of a mortal’ (*St.* 275a2).

²¹¹ On the importance of ‘le moment juste’ in Hesiod’s poem, cf. van Groningen (1958) 297, Leclerc (1994) 156, Lardinois (1998) 323 and Slatkin (2004) 45.

²¹² For these echoes, see Rowe (1995) nn. on *St.* 306a8–c1.

unusual placement of the story in the *Statesman*, both late enough and early enough to adjust an already flowing discourse; a position comparable not only to the 'noble lie' of the *Republic* and the 'Great Speech' of the *Protagoras*, but beyond them to Hesiod. Going further, we may now find new force in the potential for Platonic cross-reference in the presentation of these stories. All three storytellers exploit the cliché of earthborn humans, Socrates and the Elean Stranger self-consciously so, in dialogues which follow *Protagoras* in dramatic date. More particularly, however, it has been observed that the *Statesman*'s myth of cosmic reversal (especially the account of mankind in the age of Zeus, 274c5–d2) revisits Protagoras' picture of humans threatened by wild animals before they were rescued by divine gifts.²¹³ For Miller, the Elean Stranger's myth has a 'refutative function' in relation to Protagoras' account, insofar as it indicates that the Protagorean view of man as in control of his own fate is only half the story. Protagoras, living in the age of Zeus, is ignorant of the cosmic framework.²¹⁴ Within the Platonic corpus, it is a broadening of perspective comparable to that of the speaker in Hesiod's *Works and Days* as he enacts the realization that after all there was not one race of Strifes on earth, but two (*WD* 11–24, referring back to Hesiod's own or traditional cosmology – see p. 53 above, n. 46).

Working back thus from the presentation of the story in the *Statesman* has, I hope, avoided assumptions about how content from one Platonic dialogue *should* inform the interpretation of another. One example of this assumption, cited above, was that the oddity of the *Statesman*'s cosmological myth has provoked scholarly reflection on the compatibility of the cosmologies across dialogues.²¹⁵ Another is that the substitution of the Elean Stranger for Socrates as protagonist has prompted questions about which Socratic attitudes to impute to him, given other differences in their

²¹³ Vegetti (2005) 141. The 'noble lie' does this too, insofar as Socrates begins his account of human creation with the notion of gods moulding humans in the earth (cf. *Prt.* 320d), while the discussion of Simonides in *Rep.* 1 encourages comparison and contrast with that in the *Protagoras*.

²¹⁴ Miller (1980) 36–48. Such recollections of the *Protagoras* would prepare for further 'rethinking' of that dialogue e.g. in the discussion about parts of virtue, *St.* 306b–c.

²¹⁵ See n. 170 above.

approaches and priorities.²¹⁶ Considering rather the functions of their myths in their respective contexts, we can say at least that these two speakers, in contrast to Plato’s Protagoras, share an emphasis on the use of traditional myths for the purpose of self-correction in approach to the truth.

Bringing this point together with the wider interest occasioned by the ‘late dialogues’ in Plato’s use of predecessors,²¹⁷ the [final section](#) of this chapter will emphasize the extent to which an explicitly didactic context informs the extended use of Hesiod’s text as philosophy. Content is not the only criterion; not every narrative contrasting the present with an easy past is ‘Hesiodic’. I shall highlight the importance of speaker and mode in identifying ‘Hesiodic’ projects in Plato. Indeed, the study of Plato brings to the fore an important principle of this book: that appropriations and transformations of Hesiod are evident as much in the use of voice and the framing of material as in the material itself. Ideas of the relationship between those involved in the didactic process will be developed further in Aratus’ *Phaenomena* and its Latin translations, the focus of the [next chapter](#). The trajectory of the developing didactic voice will be tracked further, into less familiar areas, in the [final chapter](#) of this book, in which it will be shown how in the hands of the satirists the potential for philosophical dialogue, whether ‘real’ or internal, is collapsed into monologue.

3.5 Conclusion: transforming Hesiodic pedagogy

I have been arguing that certain features of mode and speaker common to Plato’s major rewritings of the ‘myth of races’, and moreover their philosophical significance for Plato, become more evident when the passages and their respective dialogues are considered together in the light of the ‘myth of the races’ in its Hesiodic context. For example, ostentatious switches of discursive mode in every extended treatment of the metallic races reveal at least that Plato is aware of different discursive modes in and around

²¹⁶ See Zuckert (2009) ch. 9 on differences between them primarily as a challenge to the elder Socrates.

²¹⁷ On which, see McCabe (2000).

this story in Hesiod. The Elean Stranger embarks on a 'different road' of self-consciously never-before-told myth; in the *Protagoras*, the assembled crowd is offered a demonstration in the form of μῦθος or λόγος (and Protagoras concludes his 'Great Speech' with awareness that he has offered both, 328c); within the *Republic*, Socrates' announcement of a 'noble lie' causes some commotion within the text (Glaucón, having heard only the opening, remarks 'No wonder you were so shy about telling your falsehood', *Rep.* 414e7), as does the mathematical discourse of the Muses in *Republic* 8, introducing the resumption of the metallic 'lie' ('in tragic tones . . . playing and jesting with us', 545e).²¹⁸

The pedagogical goal of taking a self-consciously different approach is made explicit by the Elean Stranger. His story is unusual among Platonic myths (though arguably *like* Socrates' 'noble lie') in that it is not 'monologic' – that is, the conversation with Young Socrates continues through the myth, prompting some critical discussion regarding how (far) the Elean Stranger takes into account the particular characters of his interlocutors.²¹⁹ Young Socrates may not offer any real objections to the Elean Stranger's presentation,²²⁰ but the invitations for his contribution reflect the fact that the whole search for the statesman represents, at least in part, training in dialectical method ('for the sake of our becoming more able dialecticians (διδασκαλῶντες) in relation to all subjects', *St.* 285d5–7). What must be highlighted is that the dialogue is here viewed as training for *both* participants.²²¹ In narrating to 'Young' Socrates the myth of the reversed cosmos, the Elean Stranger does not merely recall the didactic function of the 'myth of the races' for 'foolish/childish' (νήπιος) Perses in the *Works and Days*. Rather, the failure of the Elean Stranger's myth as a pedagogical image of the things that really matter (cf. 285e2–86a) holds up the process of inquiry for both Young Socrates and the Elean

²¹⁸ See also the Myth of Er, with Halliwell (2006), and compare the introduction of the myth in the *Gorgias* 523a: a 'mythos which I believe is a logos'.

²¹⁹ On the Elean Stranger's interlocutors and the suitability of his methods for his audience, see Hemmenway (1994).

²²⁰ Most (2002) 11 therefore concludes that this myth is not really an exception to the 'monologic' corpus.

²²¹ As Blondell (2002) 346 admits, having first noted (340) a Parmenidean authoritarian tone in the Stranger's teaching.

Stranger, and provokes self-critique regarding the greater and lesser mistakes they made:

when asked for the king and statesman from the present rotation and mode of generation we replied with the shepherd from the opposite period . . . a god instead of a mortal – in that way we went very greatly astray (ταύτη μὲν πάμπολυ παρηνέχθημεν); but in that we revealed him as ruling over the whole city together, but did not specify in what manner, in this way, by contrast, what was said was true, but the whole of it was not said, nor was it clear, which is why our mistake was lesser than in the other respect. (*Statesman* 274e9–75a6, trans. Rowe)

Thus, the Elean Stranger’s preoccupation with abstract method allows for a striking level of recantation and side-tracking, whose effect has been described as that of ‘a thinker arguing with himself’.²²²

In what follows I should like to consider this further as a ‘Hesiodic’ legacy. It should be remembered that an allusion to Hesiod need not be proportionally equivalent, let alone functionally equivalent, to its appearance in the Hesiodic poem; a small element in Hesiod’s narrative may appear as a much larger structural feature of a later text. Hesiod’s wish that he could have avoided living through the present (πρόσθε θανεῖν), or experienced life in a later era (ἔπειτα γενέσθαι *WD* 174–6), is open to divergent interpretations in its original context (see pp. 84–5 above). But the cyclical frameworks of Empedocles’ system²²³ and of the *Statesman*’s cosmological myth may draw inspiration from it. The Elean Stranger seems also, however, to have picked up the self-consciousness of Hesiod’s narration and developed it into self-questioning. Like Hesiod, the Elean Stranger breaks off his narrative to draw attention to the fact that we live in the present (age of Zeus) and to ask which era is preferable (*St.* 272b). Within the projected reversing cosmic framework of the *Statesman* myth, on the two-stage interpretation, the era ‘before’ our own would refer to the age of Cronus, and so would the one ‘afterwards’. It might therefore be the case that while encouraging Young Socrates to take a ‘Hesiodic’ moment of detachment from his own era, the Elean

²²² Schofield (2006) 166 and n. 72.

²²³ Which recalls Hesiod in so many other details – see first Hershbell (1970).

Stranger is also mischievously appropriating and rephrasing *WD* 174–5 as a question about the structure he himself has presented.

On a larger scale, the revisiting of ideas has been identified as key to the structure of this dialogue and to the trilogy, beginning with the *Theaetetus*, of which the *Statesman* forms the third part.²²⁴ The basic 'rhythm' of correction and resumption in conversation is of course typical of Platonic procedure; most dialogues open by introducing themes and definitions to which the protagonist later returns on a different level.²²⁵ The sense of this process as a mimesis of *self*-education is more charged in the *Statesman*, however, because of the near-silent presence of the elder Socrates while the Elean Stranger addresses Young Socrates. Critics have tended to focus on this oddity as an implicit critique of the Elean Stranger's approach, especially since it seems to be the elder Socrates who speaks the last words of the *Statesman*.²²⁶ More fundamental, in my judgement, is the way in which the *Statesman*'s use of 'Young Socrates' as an interlocutor, while the elder Socrates is present but silent, calls attention to the notion that the 'teacher' undergoes education.²²⁷ It supports the reading of the *Protagoras* earlier in this chapter, in which it was suggested that Socrates' avowed intention to use Prometheus to promote self-analysis (*Prt.* 361d3–4) implicitly corrected Protagoras' more crude appropriation of the Hesiodic content and mode in his 'Great Speech'. This element of self-education is the crucial element in a 'philosophical' appropriation of the pattern of realization and re-presentation governing the *Works and Days* – true love of wisdom will not allow self-regard to halt the search.

With this broad point in view, we may now turn to other ways in which the Elean Stranger in the *Statesman* and Socrates in the

²²⁴ See Merrill (2003) for the thesis that the dialogue forms a ring-cycle focused on the idea of the statesman as herdsman. She also emphasizes (37) the potential for self-editing in the dramatic frame of the *Theaetetus*, which presents itself as Euclides' transcription, amended after consultation with Socrates himself, of Socrates' account of a conversation in Theodorus' school.

²²⁵ Burnyeat (1998).

²²⁶ Scodel (1987) argues that the Elean Stranger becomes more 'Socratic' by the end.

²²⁷ See e.g. Socrates' account of going to Diotima as a pupil 'knowing that I am in need of teachers' *Symp.* 207c6), or the conclusion in the *Laches* that all the participants will join their sons in school (201b). For Zuckert (2009) 708, the address of 'Socrates' invites us to think of the elder Socrates as another interlocutor.

Protagoras and *Republic* retrospectively highlight as 'philosophical' certain striking features of Hesiod's speaker, his didactic mode and the way in which he characterizes his utterance. First, the introduction of the Elean Stranger in the *Sophist* as a foreigner²²⁸ and (pointedly?) as a philosopher has provoked critics for the most part to *contrast* his approach with that of Socrates and in addition to point out the potential for their mutual criticism or a 'drama' of opposition.²²⁹ However, it is a feature unifying Protagoras, Socrates and the Elean Stranger that they are individuals whose status within their community is uncertain. In this respect they all echo 'Hesiod'. The poetics of the speaker in the *Works and Days* have been described as a traditional construction of a 'metanastic' voice, whose authority as a wise advisor paradoxically stems in some degree from a sense of estrangement from the local community.²³⁰ This is overstated, in the sense that the speaker never explicitly claims foreignness for himself, but his regret at being among the men of the Iron race (*WD* 174–6) memorably expresses the loneliness of the individual in a crowd (and his moral authority depends on it; cf. above p. 87, below pp. 192–3). Foreignness is overt in the case of Protagoras, who draws attention to the dangers he faces as a ξένος (*Prt.* 316c5–d2). And although Socrates was famous for *not* leaving his native Athens,²³¹ a similarly spiritual estrangement from 'the many' at Athens is arguably the most distinctive feature of his characterization across the Platonic dialogues, and may be recalled at the start of the *Statesman*.²³²

At the same time, these particular dialogues all involve or suggest a kinship connection between those involved in the didactic process. Bearing in mind that the troubled brotherhood of Hesiod and Perses is fundamental to the dynamic of the *Works*

²²⁸ On the translation of ξένος, see n. 33 above.

²²⁹ Blondell (2003) argues that his anonymity transcends individualism (which Socrates embodies), such that the Elean Stranger represents the true philosopher. On the 'drama of opposition', see Gonzalez (2000).

²³⁰ Martin (1992). For a reading of the *Statesman* myth which emphasizes 'l'isolation du sage', see Brague (1982) ch. 2.

²³¹ See *Crito* 52b, 53a. In Plato's dialogues, he is seen outside the city walls only in the *Phaedrus*, where it is remarked that he is 'very much out of place' (230c6).

²³² If, as Miller (1980) ch. 1 argues, the dramatic background to the *Statesman* is Socrates' trial, recollections of the δίκαι in the background of the *Works and Days* could only help.

and *Days* (see above [ch. 1](#) n. 93), we may be tempted to find significance in the use of Glaucón and Adeimantus as Socrates' interlocutors in the *Republic* after Book 1. On one level, of course, the presence of this pair of brothers gives Socrates' emphasis on 'fraternity' in the *Republic*'s 'noble lie' a resonance in the world of the dialogue.²³³ Beyond this, however, the idea of Hesiod as a model for the ethical project of the *Republic* encourages the recollection that Glaucón and Adeimantus are *Plato's* real-life brothers and thereby the idea that Socrates (in this dialogue at least) is made to speak for Plato. For the *Protagoras*, too, Hesiod's use of Prometheus and Epimetheus for his own address to Perses in the *Works and Days* sheds light on the jostling between Socrates and Protagoras (the true target of the dialogue's didaxis) over the roles of Prometheus and Epimetheus from Protagoras' myth.

I wonder therefore whether Plato is claiming for philosophy an element of Hesiodic didactic which is unique in extant wisdom literature; a brotherly address, however hectoring, lacks the *inherent* hierarchy in the Near-Eastern and Egyptian patterns of a father addressing a son, or a sage a king.²³⁴ As for the *Statesman*, the opening jokes about 'kinship' in looks or names between Socrates and the two young interlocutors (*St.* 257d1–8a) draw attention to the didactic dynamic between the Elean Stranger and Young Socrates as more oblique than if Socrates were teaching 'younger Socrates' directly. On my reading, then, these Platonic dialogues make use of the relationship between Hesiod and Perses as potential for more equal conversation.

Finally, considering how Platonic speakers characterize their versions of the races, one repeated feature perhaps encapsulates the way in which I find these dialogues appropriate, correct and transform Hesiod's modes of utterance into material for an expanding discussion. In the *Republic*, Socrates describes his account of faulty politics as a 'sketch' (ὑπογραφῆς 548d2), selective in order to be practicable. Yet Socrates' account becomes so detailed that he

²³³ Similarly, Hesiod's emphasis on warring brothers in the Iron Age within the context of the myth of races (*WD* 184) ought to resonate with *his* brother Perses, given that the dispute between them is the dramatic background of the *Works and Days* itself.

²³⁴ Having surveyed extant wisdom literature, West (1978) 34 considers reasons for Hesiod's 'deviation' from the 'usual' pattern.

concludes the account of the worst man by proposing to summarize just that section (κεφαλαιωσώμεθα *Rep.* 576b4). Ideas of a summary sketch *and* a detailed account are similarly attached in the *Statesman* to a recollection of the Hesiodic story; although Young Socrates had requested that he ‘leave nothing out’ (*St.* 269c3), the Elean Stranger announces after the myth that, like sculptors in a hurry using masses of material beyond what is necessary, their ‘outline’ (περιγραφὴν 277c1) has got too big. Given the prominence of the mysterious hapax ἐκκορυφώσω in the introduction to Hesiod’s metallic narrative of almost a hundred lines (*WD* 106), I suggest that Plato constructs his predecessor as announcing a ‘sketch that piles up’;²³⁵ identifiably ‘Hesiodic’ self-consciousness is reimagined as ‘philosophical’ awareness of the potential for a discussion to expand beyond due measure.

For those concerned with Platonic studies, this chapter should have made evident how much remains to be done with the question of Plato’s response to Hesiod, let alone his use of other poets. In particular, the role of Hesiodic echoes in relation to those of Homer merits further detailed investigation.²³⁶ On the strength of the three dialogues investigated in this chapter, we might posit, for example, that where Homer, or heroic epic, seems to be evoked in the *frame* of a dialogue, Hesiod is found as the nuance – that is, Hesiod comes to symbolize for Plato the need to look harder. This is why, having emphasized in my introduction the diversity of Plato’s treatment of Hesiod’s races, I have sought in conclusion to show how having Hesiod in mind can aid awareness of the interconnectedness and overall goal of the Platonic corpus. For the reading and rereading of Hesiod has a particular purpose in Plato. Since progression towards truth may well involve constant repetition of the same questions,

²³⁵ In addition to the scholars cited in [ch. 2](#) n. 114, Peabody (1975) 248, noting that in the *Iliad* the middle verb κορύσσειν, used in relation to the transfiguration of Eris, means ‘rise with a crest’, argues that ἐκκορυφώω in Hesiod means ‘enlarge’ or ‘elaborate’ in a somewhat hostile sense, under conditions of contest. Haubold (2010) 77 n. 61 emphasizes the sense of ‘bring to its peak’ in Hesiod’s word and suggests that it inspired Socrates’ overt construction of the ‘noble lie’. κεφαλ- vocabulary in Plato seems to be attached to notions of ‘summary’ – see Ford (1994) 202–3, cited in Morgan (2000) 280 in the context of noting that embedded narratives bulk ever larger in the Platonic corpus.

²³⁶ One satisfying early example is O’Connor (2007) on the *Republic*. It would be worth following up the observation by Yamagata (2010) 73 that shifts in tone in the *Protagoras* and *Symposium* are marked by citations of different poets.

particularly in the field of ethics, the repetition and variation of ideas across the Platonic dialogues construct the cumulative form of argument within the *Works and Days* as 'philosophical'.²³⁷ Plato was not the first to associate Hesiod with the toilsome path to truth (see [ch. 1](#) above, n. 37), but my contention is that in so illuminating the use of Hesiod for philosophy, turning didactic into dialogue, he played a crucial role in opening up different strands of response to Hesiod in antiquity.

²³⁷ Cf. *Meno* 85c10–11 for the idea that repetition and variation bring about progression in knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

‘THEY CALLED HER JUSTICE . . .’: READING HESIOD IN ARATUS’ *PHAENOMENA*

4.1 Introduction: approaching the *Phaenomena*

Hesiod’s importance for the poetry of the third century BCE is a ‘familiar fact of literary history’.¹ As Plato’s Socrates repeatedly demonstrated, however, familiarity does not imply a synoptic understanding; one truism is that Hesiod was ‘not-Homer’,² but the positive significance of Hesiod for Hellenistic poetry in general is difficult to formulate concisely.³ Renewed attention to individual authors such as Callimachus has tended to emphasize the diversity of the ‘Hesiodic’ voices adopted.⁴ This chapter aims to demonstrate that in the case of Aratus’ *Phaenomena*, apparently more unified as a response to Hesiod, familiarity with the fact of Hesiod’s influence on Aratus has masked its complexity and especially a real uncertainty about the meaning of the Hesiodic poems for this new didactic project.

The standard descriptions of Aratus’ *Phaenomena* offer two ways of viewing its response to the intellectual developments of the early third century BCE. From one angle, this hexameter poem of just over 1,000 lines transforms prose treatises on constellations

This chapter expands and updates the argument of Van Noorden (2009).

¹ Hunter (2005) 239, with bibliography.

² The idea of ‘Hesiod’ as (himself deliberately) ‘not-Homer’ is perhaps overstated by Fakas (2001). Koning (2010) explores in detail this longer strand of Hesiod’s reception.

³ According to Schroeder (2006) 288–90, 293, ‘Hesiodism’ for Hellenistic poets comprises ‘an interest in catalog and genealogical poetry . . . tales of metamorphosis, the use of proverbial expressions . . . an anti-heroic attitude . . . sometimes anti authoritarian, [sometimes] erotic tone . . . memorable episodes from Hesiod’s poetry . . . the use of an epic vocabulary which differs from Homer’s . . . thematic diversity’. All this may be true, but such a definition is too nebulous to be helpful in elucidating particular instances of allusion. Koning (2010) 333–41 analyses metaphors through which to compare Hesiod and Homer in this period.

⁴ See e.g. Sistakou (2009) with further bibliography.

and weather signs into verse;⁵ on the converse description, it 'updates' Hesiod's *Works and Days* with advanced understanding of the natural world.⁶ Aratus' parallel debts to Hesiod's *Theogony*⁷ and his use of Homer, too, prompted tributes and comment in antiquity as well as in modern times.⁸ But structurally, materially⁹ and stylistically¹⁰ evocative of the *Works and Days*, Aratus' *Phaenomena* marks itself as an extended engagement with Hesiod especially in its Zeus-centred proem¹¹ and in the 'excursus' on the constellation of the Maiden, in which doubt about the Maiden's identity frames a myth about the departure of Δίκη from among mortals as their (metallic) quality degenerates (*Ph.* 96–136). In such detailed 'reading' of Hesiod, Aratus' poem goes beyond anything seen in, for example, what survives of Callimachus.

It has recently been suggested that the depth of Hesiodic texture in Aratus' poem may be 'a sign that it stands near the beginning, chronologically and thematically, of a new Hesiodic "didactic" tradition'. One implication of this suggestion is that the 'myth of the races' is for Aratus 'vintage Hesiod', and indeed Hesiod's images of the current generation may even be a target of Aratus' very Hesiodic proem.¹² This chapter will explain how Aratus' next response to this passage, his excursus on the Maiden constellation,

⁵ Aratus' commentator Hipparchus (second century BCE) identified Eudoxus' *Phaenomena* as the source for Aratus' astronomical material; the majority of Aratus' weather signs overlap with material preserved in a Peripatetic treatise *De Signis*, but both sources are disputed; see Sider and Brunschön (2007) esp. 16–18.

⁶ See e.g. Kidd (1997) 8–9.

⁷ Systematic metrical analysis in Gallego Real (2004); for literary treatment, see Fakas (2001).

⁸ For ancient debate about Aratus as a ζηλωτής (emulator) of Hesiod or Homer, see van Groningen (1953) on the *Lives* of Aratus; see Kidd (1997) 23–5 for an overview of Aratus' use of Homer.

⁹ On structure and material, see first Fakas (2001) ch. 2. On the mixture of 'grandiose' and 'lowly' registers in each poem, see Hutchinson (1988) 216.

¹⁰ Porter (1946) shows that Aratus' metrical tendencies are, by comparison with those of Callimachus and Apollonius, unusually similar to those of Hesiod.

¹¹ See James (1972) 34–8, Fakas (2001) 5–66.

¹² Both points in Hunter (2014) 102; he notes that Aratus' picture of the highways, meeting places, sea and harbours as 'filled with Zeus' (*Ph.* 2–4) reverses the image of the earth and sea now filled with the miseries Pandora has released (*WD* 100–4), while Aratus' assertion that 'our γένος too is that of Zeus' (*Ph.* 5) replaces Hesiod's 'now is the race of Iron' (*WD* 176). In this context, Aratus' greeting to 'Zeus and the earlier generation' (προτέρη γενεή *Ph.* 16) is best taken as evoking a generation parallel to Hesiod's Heroës, 'the generation prior to our own' (*WD* 160), pace Volk (2012) 225 who considers it an

may be considered a sort of parable as well as a test case for both his construction and the reader's understanding of that new 'Hesiodic "didactic" tradition'. The particular fusion of past and present embodied by the Maiden as a 'sign' both tests the perspective of the current observer and opens up questions about the authority required to articulate the will of Zeus. To some extent, it undermines the difference, so often emphasized, between the *Phaenomena*'s emphasis on the *ease* of reading Zeus's signs and Hesiod's account of the mind of Zeus as 'difficult for mortal men to know' (*WD* 484).¹³ More generally, it asserts the possibility of polysemy as central to the way that a didactic poem (as opposed to a prose treatise) works.

A range of interpretations in the ancient scholia, and in three Latin translations of the *Phaenomena* (fragments by a youthful Cicero, most of the *Aratus* attributed to Germanicus Caesar (nephew of Tiberius) and a complete translation by Avienus (c. 360 CE) survive), will be cited to apply to Aratus the point, well recognized by scholars of Virgil and others, that critical disparity among readers in itself identifies a tension in the text.¹⁴ I shall argue that this is connected with Aratus' own response to Hesiod. In the enigmatic sign of the Maiden, which is the *Phaenomena*'s clearest link with the *Works and Days*, it may be seen that for Aratus, Hesiod's poetry has become itself part of the 'mind of Zeus', a world of material to be interpreted and appropriated, written in the sky,¹⁵ and hence susceptible to new reading.

My focus on the Maiden passage as key to Aratus' wider handling of Hesiod in his *Phaenomena* will lay the groundwork for the following two chapters on Roman authors, which argue that Aratus, despite his immense popularity in antiquity,¹⁶ did *not* spell

address to the Golden Age. Fakas (2001) 56–7 explains the address as Aratus' leave-taking of heroic epic. Kidd (1997) 172–3 summarizes ancient and modern debate about the meaning of this phrase.

¹³ On this contrast cf. Hunter (2004) 230–1.

¹⁴ See Perkell (2002) 8 and O'Hara (2007) 7, with Fish (1980).

¹⁵ On this implicit theme in Aratus' poem, see Volk (2012).

¹⁶ See first Martin (1956) on translations by Varro Atax, Ovid and others not extant; at least twenty-seven authors of commentaries are attested (for the anonymous fragments, see Maass (1898)). Lewis (1992) argues that the best explanation for the poem's long-lasting popularity was its use as an astronomical textbook; for papyrological evidence, see Cribiore (2001) 142–3 nn. 56–7. However, Gee (2013) 5–35 argues that it was because of Aratus' forging a new discourse of 'philosophical poetry'.

the end for detailed responses to Hesiod's account and wider poem.¹⁷ Rather, in the wake of Aratus, besides implicit reflection on what constitutes didactic authority,¹⁸ and explicit argument about what is 'proper to scientific practice',¹⁹ we find in Hellenistic and Roman poets independent fusions of pre- and post-Aratean traditions of technical instruction, as well as use of Aratus, in reflecting and constructing images of their universe.²⁰

In the fluctuating fashions of modern scholarship, too, Aratus' *Phaenomena* has attracted markedly divergent readings. The information (from the ancient *Lives* of Aratus) that Aratus and his royal patron Antigonos Gonatas associated with well-known Stoics led some scholars to focus on the potentially Stoic message of the *Phaenomena*, according to which the fixed stars are benevolent signs from Zeus in a divinely ordered cosmos.²¹ Others downplay the presence of serious religious ideas in the *Phaenomena* and highlight instead its self-conscious response to the new literary environment in which 'professional' knowledge was stored in libraries.²² It is no longer thought necessary to choose between these contexts, however; the most productive commentaries emphasize the plurality of cultural frames, both contemporary and archaic, which contribute to our understanding of this Hellenistic poem.²³

One result of this move is that astronomical instruction is not, to use the flawed intentionalist terminology (see above 1.2d),

¹⁷ Pace Franchet d'Espèrey (1997) 176, on Astraea in Latin poetry: 'même si des traits hésiodiques peuvent apparaître chez les poètes latins, il est clair que le mythe qu'ils ont en tête est celui d'Aratos'.

¹⁸ On this topic see Hunter (2014) 89–111, comparing the terms of ancient debate about Homer.

¹⁹ μαθηματικῆς ἴδιον ἐμπειρίας, in Hipparchus' criticism of Attalus' commentary on the poem. I cite the translation of Tueller and Macfarlane (2009) 245.

²⁰ On the blend in Virgil's *Georgics*, see Farrell (1991) 157–67 and *passim*; also Gee (2013) ch. 2. On Ovid's *Fasti*, see Gee (2000). Fiedler (2004) xvii notes Avienus' continuing recourse to Hesiod.

²¹ See in particular Erren (1967); Effé (1977) 40–56 with the review of Kenney (1979). Gee (2000) 70–90 is more nuanced, revealing in the poem a fusion of (Stoic) linguistic and philosophical ideas.

²² See especially Fakas (2001) 27–32 and Cusset (2011), arguing that the Stoicism in Aratus' poem is limited by comparison with Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*.

²³ See Caspers (2003) reviewing Fakas. For examples of a blend, see Possanza (2004) 95–8 and Hunter (2004) 226–7. Indeed, Hunter (240–2) credits Aratus with a nice fusion of 'Stoic' and 'literary' explanations of Hesiod's Golden men as the origin of the stars.

merely a vehicle for Aratus’ ‘real goal’, conceived as a response to post-Hesiodic developments, whether ‘Stoic’ or ‘literary’. Rather, this didactic project and Aratus’ response to Hesiod re-emerges with a new self-consciousness, a move giving rise to detailed and subtle accounts of the relationships that Aratus constructs with his predecessor.²⁴

Aratus’ *mimesis* of Hesiod is already a point of critical interest in the Hellenistic period. However many points about Callimachus’ famous epigram on Aratus have come in for debate,²⁵ it is clear at least that the ‘Hesiodism’ of the *Phaenomena* is singled out for comment:

Ἡσιόδου τό τ’ αἶσιμα καὶ ὁ τρόπος· οὐ τὸν ἀοιδῶν²⁶
 ἔσχατον, ἀλλ’ ὀκνέω μὴ τὸ μελιχρότατον
 τῶν ἐπέων ὁ Σολεύς ἀπέμαξετο· χαίρετε λεπταί
 ῥήσεις, Ἀρήτου σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης.

Hesiod’s is the song-theme and the manner: not the highest of songs, but – dare I say it – the man from Soli has recast the sweetest of verses. Hail subtle lines, the sign of Aratus’ sleeplessness. (*Epigram 27 Pfeiffer* = *Palatine Anthology* 9.507; trans. adapted from Hunter 2014)

The primary context in which to understand the terms of this epigram seems to be ‘a set of ancient oppositions between Homer and Hesiod’, both stylistic and otherwise, in which Callimachus dares to praise Aratus for his choice of model.²⁷ Still, we may well wonder what Callimachus’ observation of the *Phaenomena*’s ‘Hesiodism’ will have implied to contemporary readers about Aratus’ poem *qua* didactic project, in view of the intervening rise of prose forms of instruction. One answer places Callimachus’ praise of Aratus in the context of terming him a ‘very learned

²⁴ E.g. Schiesaro (1996), Hunter (2004), Gee (2013) ch. 1.

²⁵ For reviews of the scholarly lines on almost every word of the epigram, see Stewart (2008) (who opts for σύντονος in v. 4) and Tsantsanoglou (2009) (who (alone) dissents that it represents praise of Aratus). The text here is that discussed by Hunter (2014) 292–301.

²⁶ Cf. Obbink (2003) 62 on this reading (v. ἀοιδόν, supported by Cameron (1995b) 374–9), found in a (third (?) century CE) papyrus on the usefulness of star-signs for weather- / time-reckoning. He takes it to mean that Hesiod did not write the ‘ultimate mode’ (ἔσχατος τρόπος) that poems/poets can have (i.e. Homeric epic poetry).

²⁷ Hunter (2014) 300; he convincingly explains (295) the surprising expression ὀκνέω μὴ as a correction of the perception that in praising Aratus for imitating Hesiod, Callimachus is denigrating Homer.

poet' (πολυμαθής ... ποιητής in fr. 460 Pfeiffer from *Against Praxiphanes*); πολυμαθία had long been attributed to Hesiod (by Heraclitus, with sarcasm, in DK 22 B57) and now characterized Homer too, for 'the educated culture which gave a prominent place to the collection and recording of information now fashioned the great poets of the past in its own image'.²⁸

Aratus' *Phaenomena* is of course the best example of such appropriation. The choice to write a didactic poem, rather than systematic philosophy or a technical handbook, already signals continuity with Hesiod; each poem sets up relationships with various sets of readers, whether or not they are genuinely farmers or sailors.²⁹ At the same time, Aratean didaxis relies on a basic continuity of *material* between its archaic and contemporary sources. The extant fragments of the *Astronomia* attributed in antiquity to Hesiod (fr. 288–93 M–W) provide some of the evidence that as a subject of description and instruction, the night sky has a long pedigree in archaic and Classical poetry as well as in prose treatises.³⁰ Yet Callimachus' epigram on Aratus seems to have been understood in antiquity, at least, as having in mind Aratus' imitation of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, rather than (just) the lost *Astronomia*.³¹ Aratus' material and structural debt to Hesiod's *Works and Days* is indicated by the combination of myths, constellations and weather signs in the *Phaenomena*; it is probably with Aratus' poem in mind that Hesiod's own poem has been described as standing at the beginning of a 'special tradition of astrometeorological texts'.³²

This chapter is, however, concerned to emphasize that the *Phaenomena* in fact raises the *problem* of recapturing Hesiod's

²⁸ *Ibid.* 101 with further bibliography.

²⁹ Cf. Hunter (2004) 234–5, observing finally: 'It is, in fact, of the greatest importance that Aratus is *not* a Eudoxus (or a Hipparchus), and therefore is (in principle, at least) available to all who are able to read him.'

³⁰ Kidd (1997) 12–13 cites relevant passages in Homeric, Hesiodic, lyric and dramatic poems, noting too that Presocratic philosophers adopted the hexameter for expounding astronomical theories. On Aratus' use of Empedocles, Traglia (1963) is limited to verbal echoes of the 'golden' age in DK 31 B 128; for a bolder reading of the Maiden in the night sky in relation to Empedocles' cosmic cycle, see Gee (2013) ch. 1.

³¹ The papyrus cited in n. 26 above cites Callimachus' epigram in support of the idea that Aratus imitated Hesiod, apparently with reference to the *Works and Days* (whereas Merkelbach and West (1967) take it to refer to Hesiod's lost *Astronomia*).

³² Taub (2003) 7.

didactic authority in an era of more specialized knowledge. The development of a τέχνη is of course not simply the transferral of technical content from hexameters into a mode involving, for example, formal measurements and more technical language; it requires in addition the proclamation of such a move.³³ Thus, within antiquity, Socrates’ perversely content-based analyses, in Plato’s *Ion*, of what Homer says περὶ τεχνῶν (537a–540) slyly indicate what is amiss with understanding the archaic poets as (self-proclaimed) technical experts rather than poetic authorities. So, while Aratus’ *Phaenomena* reflects the undoubted development or realization of astronomy as a ‘scientific’ discipline,³⁴ it also has the effect of undermining such distinctions in expertise, by including the weather signs and reasserting that ‘all phenomena come from Zeus’; his wisdom has no boundaries. The poem marks both continuity and rupture with archaic didaxis of the ‘same’ themes.

In other words, the *Phaenomena*’s ‘Hesiodic’ texture provokes reflection on whether teaching is (still) needed to orientate oneself in the universe, and if not, whether the desired understanding is based on collective memory (of what Hesiod’s Muses have told him), or the evidence of independent observation. This chapter demonstrates that the myth behind the Maiden constellation, as a prominent pointer to Hesiod, calls attention to such tensions in Aratus’ didactic project. My case is supported by recent work on the *Phaenomena* which has emphasized that the signs described require mortals’ active collaboration with Zeus, that Aratus pays attention to subtle and ‘hidden’ signs, and the need to bring different signs together, all of which make Aratus’ work a prompt to consider the process of signification.³⁵

4.2 The Maiden and the *Phaenomena*

The Maiden is introduced as the daughter of Astraeus, or ‘some other’ (τεῦ ἄλλου *Ph.* 99). But ‘another story’ is current among men

³³ Lloyd (1987) 47–9 and *passim* emphasizes the ways in which those investigating nature consciously laid claim to a new kind of wisdom.

³⁴ Rihll (1999) 11 and ch. 4 notes the centrality of astronomy in the development of ‘science’.

³⁵ See first Bénatouil (2005), Volk (2010) and (with emphasis on *writing*), Volk (2012).

(100–1: λόγος γε μὲν ἐντρέχει ἄλλος / ἀνθρώποις), according to which she once spent time on earth with mortals as their lawgiver. At that time humans lived without war or seafaring, but agriculture and Justice provided all their needs. This was the Golden Age; in the Silver, Justice mingled with mortals reluctantly, emerging occasionally from the mountains to upbraid them for their wickedness and prophesy worse to come. In the Bronze era, disgusted by their violent and carnivorous ways, the Maiden abandoned them and flew up to the sky, where she can still be seen near the Herdsman.

The phrase λόγος ἄλλος directs us, with a self-conscious semi-connection, to Hesiod's 'myth of the races' (*WD* 109–201, introduced at 106: ξτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω). In Aratus, Hesiod's sequence is reduced to Gold, Silver and Bronze, now generations rather than distinct races, and the story becomes a narrative of moral decline from the perspective of the departing Maiden whom 'they called Justice' (*Ph.* 105, picking up Hesiod's figure of Justice as filial helper of Zeus, *WD* 256–60). Her departure is a response to, and symbolic of, increasing depravity among mortals. Sophisticated studies of the Hesiodic contribution to the Aratean project have re-emphasized that with this structure, Aratus asserts a connection between Hesiod's 'myth of the races' and the various portraits of Justice and violence that follow in the *Works and Days* (213–85).³⁶ Aratus has 'read' the metallic myth in its Hesiodic context to produce his own 'myth of Δίκη'.

On one level, this λόγος simply explains the presence of the Maiden in the sky, like the earlier story of the Bears' catasterism as reward for looking after young Zeus (*Ph.* 30–44), except that *her* catasterism is voluntary. However, the story itself suggests a wider significance for the world portrayed by the *Phaenomena*. In the past, the Maiden lived on earth:

ἦρχετο δ' ἀνθρώπων κατεναντίη, οὐδέ ποτ' ἀνδρῶν
οὐδέ ποτ' ἀρχαίων ἠνέηατο φύλα γυναικῶν,
ἀλλ' ἀναμίξ ἐκάθητο καὶ ἀθανάτη περ ἐοῦσα.

³⁶ For articulations of this point cf. first Schiesaro (1996), Fakas (2001) 151–75 and (independently reading Hesiod *WD* 106–285 as a single section) Beall (2004) 182 and n. 22.

Playing Hesiod: The ‘Myth of the Races’

And she came face to face with men, and did not ever spurn the tribes of ancient men and women, but sat in their midst although she was immortal. (*Phaenomena* 102–4, trans. Kidd)

Her interaction with mortals is then exemplified by a description of her lawgiving activities (vv. 105–7), and in what follows, the Golden Age is marked, almost defined by, her wider care of mortals:

καὶ βίον οὐπω νῆες ἀπόπροθεν ἡγίνεσκον,
ἀλλὰ βόες καὶ ἄροτρα καὶ αὐτὴ πότνια λαῶν
μυρία πάντα παρείχε Δίκη, δώτειρα δικαίων.
τόφρ’ ἦν ὄφρ’ ἔτι γαῖα γένος χρύσειον ἔφερβεν.

And as yet no ships brought them livelihood from afar, but oxen and ploughs and Justice herself, queen of the people and giver of a civilized life, provided all their countless needs. That was as long as the earth still nurtured the Golden Age. (*Phaenomena* 111–14, trans. Kidd)

In the Silver Age, this Demeter-like sustenance and care is withdrawn, but Δίκη is still prepared to give men explicit warnings (reported in vv. 121–6). She eventually fled when they turned to murder. So constructed, this history of human decline emphasizes what humans have lost. The present world is one in which we need whatever help ‘benign’ Zeus (ἥπιος 5) can provide, in the form of signs (δεξιὰ σημαίνει, 6, recalls traditionally favourable omens), whereas we infer from the λόγος ἄλλος that in the Golden Age, mortals had no need of ‘signs’ to guide their lives, but lived ‘just as they were’ (αὐτως 10) under the care of Δίκη. The story of her departure, then, describes the origin of the poem’s underlying principle that viewers must independently deduce meaning from ‘signs’.³⁷ It can be read as an *aetion* of the need, not only for economic activity such as trade,³⁸ but also for the individual observation that characterizes the present, replacing the communal theoxenies of the past.

The idea that the passage on the Maiden has a special status in relation to the *Phaenomena* as a project³⁹ is supported by three

³⁷ Compare now Volk (2012) 223–5.

³⁸ Compare with the Maiden’s departure Hesiod’s insistence that we must work because the gods ‘hid’ the easy sources of livelihood (*WD* 42–6, 90–105).

³⁹ On its marked quality, cf. e.g. Schiesaro (1996) 23: ‘so evidently different from the rest of the *Phaenomena*’. For Fakas (2001) 150, ‘die narrative Digression über Dike’ is in a tradition of (pretended) digressions which, after Hesiod, became a firm component of the didactic genre.

aspects of its presentation. First, in saluting the Maiden 'whether she is the daughter of Astraeus . . . or some other' (vv. 98–9), the narrator sets out to intrigue. The Hellenistic religiosity of this playful equivocation⁴⁰ keeps open the question of the Maiden's paternity and therefore her identity. The 'other' parent may hint at Zeus, if we recall *Theogony* 902 and *Works and Days* 256, but the idea that the Maiden is his daughter is initially only one among several possibilities.⁴¹ Non-Hellenic political or theological receptions of Aratus capitalize on the fact that he does not straightforwardly assert that the Maiden is Δίκη; the scholia give more detailed attention to alternatives ('others say she is Demeter / Isis / *Tuchē* / Thespia / Erigone . . .').⁴²

This is not the first time in the poem that Aratus parades uncertainty about the identity of a star-group, nor is it the last (see [section 4.2b](#) below), but it is the only instance where he equivocates *and* offers a myth. Readers are left guessing about the precise relation of the story to the two options just presented.⁴³ However understood, the combination challenges readers to identify this Maiden; moreover, the prayer that whoever she is, 'may her way be peaceful' (εὖκῆλος φορέοιτο *Ph.* 100) suggests there is something at stake.⁴⁴

Second, it is worth noting that although this story is one of several 'aetiological' myths in Aratus' poem,⁴⁵ it is by far the longest such narrative. Indeed, one scholiast notes criticism of

⁴⁰ See Bellandi (2000), and compare Callimachus *Hymn* 1.5–7 on the options for Zeus's birthplace.

⁴¹ For Gee (2013) 27, Aratus here exposes contradictions within Hesiod; the Maiden is *either* Justice, daughter of Zeus, *or* a star, daughter of Astraeus ['they say' in *Ph.* 98 may point to Hesiod's own presentation of this genealogy at *Theogony* 378–82].

⁴² Discussion runs to several pages of the scholia collected in Martin (1974). See e.g. Manilius *Astr.* 2.442: Virgo 'belongs to' Ceres. Selden (1998) 339–44 emphasizes the importance of Isis as a constellation in Ptolemaic propaganda. The identification Erigone is found in Virgil *Geo.* 1.33, Manilius *Astr.* 4.542.

⁴³ As Fakas (2001) 163 n. 55 notes, the formal echo of τευ ἄλλου in λόγος γε μὲν ἐντρέχει ἄλλος (*Ph.* 100) suggests that the story fleshes out this second option; Bellandi (2000) 110 reads it as γάρ, citing Denniston ('a very rare use'). However, γε is translated as adversative by both Kidd (1997): 'There is, *however*, another story . . .' and Martin (1998): '*Mais* une autre tradition court . . .' The commentators on Aratus' Latin translations are similarly divided.

⁴⁴ Hopkinson (1988) 141 on *Ph.* 98–100 (εἴτ' οὖν Ἀστραίου κείνη γένος) cites Denniston 418–19: 'οὖν in this combination implies that the alternatives are not important for the main point at issue'.

⁴⁵ The story of the Horse (*Ph.* 205–24) may also be classed among these myths, although its aetiological focus is not the constellation but Hippocrene.

Aratus for ‘drawing out the story’ (ὡς παρατείνοντι τὴν μυθολογίαν ἐμέμψαντο), but defends his author with the fact that the Maiden story is βιωφελής, ‘helpful’, for men. The Maiden’s myth takes up forty lines, while the description and identification of the Horse receives nineteen (*Ph.* 205–24, the myth beginning at 216) and that of Orion’s background, nine (*Ph.* 637–46). The difference in length between the stories of the Maiden and Orion is particularly striking because they open in a similar way: compare the invocation of the Maiden and recollection of the alternative story (100–1: εὐκηλος φορέοιτο. λόγος γε μὲν ἐντρέχει ἄλλος / ἀνθρώποις) with that of Artemis (‘May Artemis be gracious!’ Ἄρτεμις ἰλήκοι 637) followed by the introduction of ‘a tale of the ancients’ (637: προτέρων λόγος, οἱ μιν ἔφαντο).

Comparing the stories of Artemis and the Maiden, it can be seen that the stories are thematically similar, insofar as both goddesses show their righteous anger against mortals. Indeed, Aratus’ Augustan translator Germanicus reframes both stories so as to bring this out.⁴⁶ The narrative of the Maiden, however, grabs the readers’ attention through the use of direct speech at the centre-point of the story (its third distinctive feature). The Maiden’s interaction with mortals is initially presented indirectly, but she is heard upbraiding the men of the Silver Age and anticipating the continuing decline of mankind:

“Οἶην χρύσειοι πατέρες γενεὴν ἐλίποντο
χειροτέρην· ὑμεῖς δὲ κακώτερα τέκνα τεκείσθε.
Καὶ δὴ που πόλεμοι, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀνάρσιον αἶμα
ἔσσεται ἀνθρώποισι, κακῶν⁴⁷ δ’ ἐπικείσεται ἄλγος.”

‘What an inferior generation your golden fathers have left! And you are likely to beget a still more evil progeny. There will surely be wars, yes, and unnatural bloodshed among men, and suffering from their troubles will come upon them.’ (*Phaenomena* 123–6, trans. Kidd)

This is the only passage of direct speech in the entire *Phaenomena*, a feature noticeable enough to be imitated by both the extant Latin

⁴⁶ See Lewis (1986) 226, with Germanicus *Aratus* 98–100 (‘If you are affected by the poems and mortals and do not, in hatred of the human race, turn a deaf ear to those who venerate you’) and 656 (‘Desist, mortals, the anger of the gods is never mild’).

⁴⁷ I follow Kidd (1997), who chooses κακῶν after discussion on this line of all the MSS variants. Martin (1998) prints κακόν, overriding his own earlier preference for κακῶ (Voss’s conjecture).

translations of this part of Aratus' poem.⁴⁸ Despite the emphasis in the proem on the fact that Zeus 'speaks' to mortals (λέγει 7, 8), only here, at the crux of the narrative, does the *Phaenomena* really hand over to its audience the responsibility of responding to 'spoken' information about the world. It is notable that the poet now enables or requires his readers to hear the Maiden directly, given that in the preceding description of the Golden Age, the Maiden's communications are just summarized ('encouraging them, she intoned judgements for the good of the people': δημοτέρας ἤειδεν ἐπισπέρχουσα θέμιστας 107). Aratus' own addressees, apostrophized alongside the Silver men, are left to judge how (far) the Maiden's words might relate also to their own situation.⁴⁹

4.2a Our Maiden's voice?

The Silver men should certainly infer from the predicted onset of evils that their descendants will lose the Maiden's direct presence. Her speech is introduced with a summary of her threats to the Silver generation, 'rebuking them for their wickedness, and she said that she would never more come face to face with them, even if they called her' (*Ph.* 121–2: καθαπτομένη κακότητος, / οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔφη εἰσωπὸς ἐλεύσεσθαι καλέουσιν). The juxtaposition with the direct outburst suggests that these lines, which do not literally correspond to the following content, are to be understood as some kind of introduction to the Maiden's speech⁵⁰ and subsequent action. Initially, readers may take v. 122 as a reference to the final departure of Δίκη into heaven, out of disgust at the murderous, carnivorous Bronze men (*Ph.* 133–4: καὶ τότε μισήσασα Δίκη κείνων γένος ἀνδρῶν / ἔπαθ' ὑπουργανίη).

⁴⁸ Germanicus *Aratus* 126–30, Avienus *AvPh.* 326–34. The sparing use of direct speech seems to be a feature of Hesiodic (as opposed to Homeric) narrative that was recognized, imitated and intensified in the Hellenistic period: see e.g. Hunter (2005) 251.

⁴⁹ The status of internal addressees varies from poet to poet. Whereas, for Hesiod, Clay (1993) is in no doubt that the external audience sees more than Perses does, Mitsis (1993) argues that identification with Memmius is a worry for the reader of Lucretius.

⁵⁰ Cf. Martin (1998) on these lines, but recall here the apparent mismatch, explored in 2.4, between Hesiod's 'introduction' to the 'myth of the races' (*WD* 106–8), and the following narrative.

The Hesiodic intertexts of *Ph.* 125–32, however, suggest that the Maiden’s speech is not merely a ‘prophecy entirely fulfilled within the narrative’.⁵¹ While the Bronze men in Aratus correspond to their Bronze counterparts in the *Works and Days*,⁵² the Maiden’s words, ‘grief from their troubles will come upon them’ (126), echo details further ahead in Hesiod’s narrative; the wars of the Heroic generation (*WD* 161) and the helpless suffering of mankind after the eventual flight of Αἰδώς and Νέμεσις (200–1), still in the future for Hesiod’s speaker and audience. The fact that Hesiod’s account ended, not with the present, but with prophecy (νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἔστι σιδήρεον *WD* 176; Ζεὺς δ’ ὀλέσει καὶ τοῦτο γένος ... 180) should prompt in Aratus’ readers an anxiety about the place of the present in relation to the story. A more radical interpretation of the reported threat οὐδ’ ἔτ’ ... εἰσωπὸς ἐλεύσεσθαι (*Ph.* 122) suggests itself – the Maiden is warning that there may come a time when even her constellation may not be ‘visible’ in the heavens as it is for the moment (*Ph.* 135–6: ‘she still appears by night to mortals / as the Maiden near conspicuous Bootes’).⁵³

With these points in mind, the Maiden’s appearance in the sky emerges as a challenge to current viewers to respond to her as the first ‘sign’. The question of exactly what it is she signals has prompted several different kinds of answer, each of which depends on a certain idea of the (combination of) tools or agendas with which Aratus ‘read’ Hesiod’s metallic sequence in its context. A survey of some prominent interpretations reveals, in particular, that the question of *whether* the pre-historical setting of the myth of Δίκη precludes a moral for present-day readers is difficult to separate from assumptions of just what kind of significance the Maiden constellation holds and precisely where in the account its meaning is to be found.

⁵¹ Schiesaro (1996) 12.

⁵² Fakas (2001) 159 finds echoes also of the hubristic phase of Hesiod’s Silver race.

⁵³ Indeed, this idea appears in a Neronian revision of Aratus: see Gee (2013) 140–3 on Statius’ *Thebaid* 11. The only other use of εἰσωπὸς in the *Phaenomena* was at 79 (the visibility of the stars of Ophiouchos’ shoulders). Thus, as Kidd (1997) points out on *Ph.* 122, the word is a reminder of the star context of the whole passage, and looks forward to φαίνεται at *Ph.* 135. Similarly ὑποδείελος (118) is elsewhere used only of a sunset (826). εὐκῆλος (100) similarly anticipates the ‘calm path’ of a constellation; see *ibid.* on this line.

So Fakas, for example, highlights the fact that the myth ends in the past, and reads the continuing appearance of the Maiden in the sky not as a moral exhortation but as a 'poetological' symbol of Aratus' Hesiodic pedigree.⁵⁴ By contrast, Schiesaro's Stoicizing/political reading, exploiting the information in the *Lives* of Aratus that the poem was written for King Antigonus Gonatas,⁵⁵ deems the chronological presentation of the Myth of Δίκη unimportant. Rather, the sequence's 'didactic utility' as an atemporal exposition of the need to respect Justice⁵⁶ is cited to explain the importation into the Golden Age of elements from Hesiod's Just City, such as agriculture and, especially, law (δημοτέρας θέμιστας *Ph.* 107). Aratus' fusion of the Hesiodic metallic story with the next sections in the *Works and Days*, addressed to 'kings' (*WD* 202, 248), implicitly bestows a royal audience on the story of the Maiden. Hence, *Ph.* 96–136 may be read with Aratus' opening hymn to Zeus as a very Hellenistic encomium that parallels the heavenly and earthly ruler; this is one respect in which, for Schiesaro, Aratus' reading marks 'a very important stage for the interpretation of Hesiod'.⁵⁷ On the question of the relation to Hesiod, an earlier modern interpretation argued more simply that the presence of agriculture in the Golden Age signals Aratus' 'homage' to the Hesiodic outlook in associating peace with farming.⁵⁸

None of these interpretations admits any uncertainty about the precise message the Maiden conveys. I shall argue, by contrast, that the unique features of the Maiden narrative within the *Phaenomena* are the first to confront Aratus' readers with the *problem* of interpretation and their own role in creating meaning from signs. This premise of the *Phaenomena*, a theme prominent elsewhere in

⁵⁴ Fakas (2001) 162–3, 171–3. His predecessors in the belief of the story's ethical irrelevance are Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1924) 266 and Gatz (1967) 63.

⁵⁵ For a critical assessment of the information in the *Lives*, see Ludwig (1965a).

⁵⁶ Schiesaro (1996) 10, pointing out that the mention of a Παρθένον at *Ph.* 97 recalls *WD* 256 (ἡ . . . παρθένος ἐστὶ Δίκη) before the introduction of the 'other story' recalls Hesiod's 'myth of the races'.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 24, connecting the poem with the more explicit expression of this parallel in Theocritus' *Idyll* 17, the *Encomium to Ptolemy*. See Rosati (2009) on the development in Latin poetry of such 'encomiastic' potential of Hesiod.

⁵⁸ Solmsen (1966) 127.

Hellenistic poetry,⁵⁹ comes uppermost in its optimistic conclusion, which, as others have noted, reconstructs and expands the climactic emphasis on the pious sign-reader at *Works and Days* 826–8.⁶⁰ There is, however, an early caution to be noted in the presentation of the Silver men in Aratus’ narrative; even as Aratus asserts a connection between Hesiod’s ‘myth of the races’ and the present-day urgency of keeping in contact with Justice, he simultaneously foregrounds the fact that (in every era after the Golden generation) such a connection can be realized only by the audience, whose potential for understanding is uncertain.

Consider first the steps through which current observers would identify the Maiden as Justice. To begin at the end, the fact that this figure ‘still’ appears to mortals (ἐν νουχίῃ ἔτι φαίνεται ἀνθρώποισι *Ph.* 135) implies continuity with, or replication of, her role within the story. With this in mind, the framing emphasis on the Maiden’s proximity to Βοώτης, the herdsman (96, 136) picks up the presence of ‘oxen and ploughs’ in the generation of Golden men (v. 112). This is Aratus’ most notorious modification of Hesiod’s narrative about the Golden race (*WD* 117–18: ‘the grain-giving earth brought forth fruit / of its own accord [αὐτομάτῃ]’),⁶¹ for the idea of the earth’s spontaneous nourishment had in the interim been expanded by the comic poets into a cliché of the ‘life under Cronus’.⁶² Given this, the Maiden’s celestial proximity to Βοώτης seems to reflect the fact that she ‘longed for the haunts of the former generation’ during the era of the Silver men (*Ph.* 116). In the sky, at least, she expresses her yearning for the companionship of simple herdsmen,⁶³ as the scholiast explains on *Ph.* 136: it signals ποιητικῶς the Maiden’s

⁵⁹ Cf. Cydippe’s father’s failure to recognize her divine diseases (Callimachus’ *Aetia* fr. 75.10–40 Pf.) and Lavigne and Romano (2004) on the challenge faced by readers of Posidippus’ οἰωνοσκοπικά.

⁶⁰ Hunter (2004) 225.

⁶¹ However, the translation in Most (2006) of the Golden men ἔργ’ ἐνέμοντο at *WD* 119 as ‘shared out the fruits of their labors’ anticipates ἔργα νέμονται at 231, of the inhabitants of the Just City, and so anticipates Aratus’ fusion of the two passages.

⁶² See Baldry (1953). Its status as a cliché is evident in Plato *St.* 271d; Elean Stranger uses it to confirm he has understood Young Socrates’ question about the place of the ‘life under Cronus’ in the myth of cosmic reversal. See above, pp. 148–9.

⁶³ Compare the logic of desired proximity in Aratus’ description of Cassiopeia, who stretches her arms towards Andromeda: ‘you would say she was grieving for her daughter’ (*Ph.* 196).

fondness for the life of farmers, free from politics (ἀπράγμονα βίον). Indeed, Virgil's version of the story makes this explicit: Justice when on earth lingered last among the farmers (*Geo.* 2.473–4). Hence, if current viewers perceive what the herdsman stands for,⁶⁴ the Maiden's celestial position reminds current viewers of the life of the Golden men and urges emulation of their just ways.

On this reading, the speech and continuing appearance of Δίκη literally fulfils the assertion in the proem, that Zeus rouses people to work, 'reminding them of their livelihood' (*Ph.* 7: μιμνήσκων βίοτιο). In the Maiden's introduction and in the narrative of the Golden generation, verbal links to Aratus' proem have prepared the ground for this association with Zeus: once it is known that she is called Justice (the daughter of Zeus in both *WD* 256 and *Th.* 901–2), the Maiden's activity in the meeting-place and the highway (*Ph.* 105–6: ἀγειρομένη δὲ γέροντας / ἥέ που εἰν ἀγορῇ ἢ εὐρυχόρῳ ἐν ἀγυίῃ) recalls two fields of action attributed to Zeus in the proem (μεστὰι δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαί, / πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί 2–3).

The most common view of the conclusion to the story of the Maiden is that it mitigates Hesiod's bleak picture at the end of the 'myth of the races', of humanity deserted by its protectors.⁶⁵ Indeed, the Maiden's continuing appearance does seem in keeping with the Aratean narrator's more beneficent Zeus, and the generally encouraging mode of instruction in his poem. Aratus' signs are 'readily found' (ἐτοίμη / εὐρέσθαι *Ph.* 236–7) and 'reliable declarations' (ἄρκια ἐξειπεῖν 741), and the emphasis on the ease of reading the signs mounts soon after the Maiden story (186, 189, 198–9).

It is not at all clear, however, that the myth of Δίκη in Aratus actually asserts the ability of contemporary viewers to identify her thus, and so to access a moral lesson. In my view, Aratus' narrative of metallic generations presents more a challenge to us as observers than a promise of continuing guidance.⁶⁶ In support of this reading,

⁶⁴ See further Gutzwiller (2006) 8–9, 23 on the herdsman's association with justice in Greek thought.

⁶⁵ Cf. e.g. Hutchinson (1988) 223; Toohey (1996) 8, 61.

⁶⁶ Only Bellandi *et al.* (2001) 80–2 present the story as one that 'tells of the removal of Dike from the easy possession of all humanity to the difficult conquest by individuals. We can all look to stars and read signs but it is not certain that everyone gains the deep meaning from them.'

we may first note that, unlike Aratus’ translator Germanicus, who invokes the Maiden as Justice before launching into the story,⁶⁷ Aratus’ Maiden is not explicitly called ‘Justice’ until mortals within the myth are said to have given her that name: ἐ Δίκην καλέεσκον (*Ph.* 105).⁶⁸ Until then, Aratus’ readers, judging from the Hesiodic structure of the passage, might as easily have identified the Maiden as Αἰδώς or Νέμεσις,⁶⁹ or perhaps Peace (Εἰρήνη), who walks the earth as ‘nurse of the young’ in Hesiod’s Just City (κουροτρόφος *WD* 228).

Nor is it certain from the subsequent narrative that Justice was recognized as such when she revealed herself to chide mortals in the Silver era (*Ph.* 117–28). Where Germanicus’ translation implies that she reappears in the Silver Age *in response to* mortal prayers,⁷⁰ Aratus emphasizes rather that it is she who feels the loss of the Golden men (ποθέουσα παλαιῶν ἦθεα λαῶν 116)⁷¹ and it is she who, as the subject of the verbs, initiates even the limited interaction with mortals.⁷² When the Maiden finally departs,⁷³ the response of the Silver men (παπταίνοντας 128) seems to be bewilderment rather than bereavement.⁷⁴ Further, the swift narrative transition to the Bronze generation, ‘men more destructive than their predecessors’ (130), suggests that the Maiden’s tirade

⁶⁷ Cf. Bellandi (2000) 114: uncertainty in Aratus’ opening is in Germanicus diverted into uncertainty about the correct mode of addressing the goddess Justice (*Aratus* 98: *quam te, diua, uocem?*).

⁶⁸ As Possanza (2004) 130 notes. The verse continues: ἀγειρομένη δὲ γέροντας / ἥ ἐ που εἰν ἀγορῇ ἢ εὐχόρῳ ἐν ἀγοιῇ (*Ph.* 105–6). The scholiast comments on this passage that her justice-distributing actions in the agora are cited as the reason why ‘they called her Justice’.

⁶⁹ Hopkinson (1988) reads *Ph.* 98–9 as a bridge to Hesiod: ‘another name for Nemesis is *Astraea*’. See however n. 56 above.

⁷⁰ Justice inquires: *quid me, cuius abit usus, per uota uocatis?* (*Aratus* 128): ‘Why do you call upon me with your vows when you have ceased to follow me?’ (trans. Gain (1976)).

⁷¹ Fakas (2001) 157–8 points out that Aratus has creatively ‘read’ the portrait of Justice in Hesiod *WD* 222 (‘weeping, she tracks the city and haunts of men’) as if she is *weeping for* them.

⁷² As Schiesaro (1996) 11 notes. *Ph.* 122 presents mortals’ hypothetical response: in Kidd’s translation: ‘[the Maiden] said she’d never more come face to face with them, *even if* they called her (καλέουσιν)’. Martin (1998) on this line translates ‘quand ils l’appelleraient’.

⁷³ Imperfect tenses (ἦεν 117, ἦρχετο 118) and an indefinite temporal clause 120–1 (ὅπότε) . . . πλήθονται, ἡπτελει) undercut the finality of her threat. She is far more decisive in Germanicus, where she states (once) her decision to leave, then leaves (*Aratus* 129–32).

⁷⁴ The verb primarily means searching all around to see; perhaps the Maiden has already disappeared.

has failed to stem the tide of indifference; in fact, the pace of destruction actually quickens, as two crimes are detailed in two lines (131–2). The vast majority of the constellations in the *Phaenomena* are identified in the present tense, with καλέουσι or καλέονται,⁷⁵ but if no mortal ‘recognized’ the Maiden after the Golden Age, the didactic force of this star-group for current viewers depends crucially on the act of identification (καλέεσκον) by the mortals of the Golden past.

In other words, to read the ‘sign’ presented by the Maiden, Aratus’ readers have to identify themselves with one of her audiences within the story. The poet’s framing may provide clues (see below), but I should like to highlight at this point that drawing meaning from the sight of the Maiden is inevitably partial, in the sense that while all three ages are more ‘like us’ than those in Hesiod,⁷⁶ a choice of the Golden generation as the most ‘relevant’ section of the story for Aratus’ addressees is asserted not by the text, but by the interpreter. So, for example, Schiesaro’s assumption of Aratus’ political/encomiastic agenda (a poem for King Antigonus Gonatas) leads him to put the weight of his interpretation on the description of the Golden Age. But the story itself suggests precisely that not *all* audiences alike recognize Justice; its conclusion challenges contemporary observers to see the Maiden as the Golden men saw her, but also gives them reasons to believe that they cannot.

First, the age of innocence is irrevocably past. The Bronze-Age crimes of animal slaughter and highway murder continue in the present, as is indicated by the repetition of πρῶτοι at *Ph.* 131–2. Second, and more pointedly, there is in the story’s conclusion at least a hint that the Maiden near Βοώτης does not necessarily function as a ‘sign’ of anything in particular for current observers. Her present appearance in the sky (*Ph.* 135–6: ἐν νυχίῃ ἔτι φαίνεται ἀνθρώποισι / Παρθένος ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα πολυσκέπτοιο Βοώτew) is described in terms that return us to the initial description of the constellation (*Ph.* 96–7: Ἀμφοτέροισι δὲ ποσσὶν ὕπο σκέπτοιο

⁷⁵ Precise references in the index of Maass (1893). Contrast also with the Maiden πρῶτοι . . . διεφήμεσαν (*Ph.* 221) implying ongoing recognition of Hippocrene.

⁷⁶ See Hunter (2004) 240–1 on the ‘human code’ of Aratus’ myth.

Βοώτεω / Παρθένον). The ring-composition invites rereading from the beginning; it suggests that the story is prior to the equivocation over the Maiden’s identity (98–9), as if the narrative has reminded readers of knowledge they had lost.⁷⁷ In the light of that opening doubt about the Maiden’s parentage, the repetition of Παρθένος at *Ph.* 136 seems emphatic, implying that this celestial figure is *not* recognized by current mortals as Justice⁷⁸ (another point overturned by the Augustan Germanicus, in whose finale (*Aratus* 136) she is described as *iustissima uirgo*). In *Aratus*, indeed, but for the story that ‘they called her Justice’ in the Golden Age, the Maiden could even have taken on a ‘functional’ identity⁷⁹ (the ‘Farmer’s Wife’?), given that men call Ἀρκτοφύλαξ by the name Βοώτης because (οὐνεχ’) he is close to the Wagon-Bear (*Ph.* 93).⁸⁰

Finally, it is worth reiterating that there is room for alternative identifications. Unlike constellations such as the Dragon, the Maiden receives no physical description other than that she holds a cornstalk (στάχυν *Ph.* 97) and is near the Herdsman. Some of the other possibilities (Demeter etc.), picked up by Eratosthenes, are further expanded in the fourth-century CE translation of Avienus (*AvPh.* 282–5), where a plethora of options for the Maiden’s identity suits his poem (as commonly understood) as a celebration of pagan polytheism in protest at the contemporary development of Christian monotheism.⁸¹

This is not to say that the withdrawal of the Maiden into relative obscurity brings a ‘pessimistic’ tinge to the *Phaenomena*.⁸² Rather, *Aratus’* story of the Maiden makes the point that terms such as

⁷⁷ See below, *sect.* 4.2b, on the ‘nameless’ stars (367–85), with Gee (2013) 27 on the Maiden’s ‘reappearances’ in poetry and in the heavens.

⁷⁸ So Fakas (2001) 162, although for him (164), λόγος ... ἄλλος already undermines its moral.

⁷⁹ Compare the Water Purer (*Ph.* 283) and the Serpent Holder (74–87).

⁸⁰ Mythical identifications too follow this logic: as *Aratus* presents it, the Andromeda constellation seems so-called because of proximity to Cassiopeia (‘stretched out below her mother’, 198).

⁸¹ See Gatz (1967) 68 on Eratosthenes *Catasterismoi* 9, and Bellandi *et al.* (2001) 90–1 on Avienus.

⁸² It is nevertheless revealing for my argument that at least one (otherwise) Stoicizing reading of *Aratus’* poem labels the Maiden story ‘a foreign body in the otherwise optimistic *Phainomena*’ (Pöhlmann (1973) 883).

'optimism' and 'pessimism' are out of place in this analysis.⁸³ Unlike a direct instruction, 'signs' pass responsibility for interpretation to the reader, and in themselves can offer no guarantee of success, although they improve our chances.⁸⁴ The Maiden's position in the sky, visible near a conspicuous constellation, is potentially available to those who choose to look; we may contrast the rather different spin on her celestial position in Avienus' expanded revision of the episode: already 'burning with anger', the Maiden withdraws to 'the utmost height of heaven from where she would not discern earthly lands' (*unde procul terras summa uix cerneret aethra* *AvPh.* 351).

Uncertainty about the Maiden in Aratus, I argue, points to two different but related aspects of the *Phaenomena*. The first to be considered here is that the poem itself is in an important sense 'about' interpretation. The Maiden is emblematic of the need to interpret; her story is 'prior' to the *Phaenomena*'s focus on reading signs and with its direct speech emphasizes the role of the reader/viewer in creating meaning. Both in this and in her demand for continuity between myth and visual sign, the Maiden is the most forceful indication in the *Phaenomena* of the dimension that a prose treatise lacks.⁸⁵

4.2b *Playing the observer*

As a sign, then, the Maiden is the *Phaenomena*'s first extended challenge to viewers to turn observations into evidence. With the question of the Maiden's identification in view, we notice a wider equivocation within the *Phaenomena* as to how we know the names of the stars. Early on, Aratus calls attention to this question through the ostentatiously unidentified figure of the 'Man on his

⁸³ Schiesaro (1997) 71 makes a similar point about the availability of divine 'signs' in Virgil's *Georgics*; I would argue that this should be viewed as an Aratean legacy.

⁸⁴ As Hunter (2004) 242 notes in reply to Pöhlmann (1973) [n. 82 above] continuing: 'If for the Stoic, "all human beings are . . . bad and unhappy," . . . Hesiod and the Stoics to some extent . . . can be read as coming together'.

⁸⁵ Cf. Hunter (2004) 234–5 on Aratus' lack of comprehensiveness: 'Whereas systematic philosophy and the technical handbook seek to close down options, didactic poetry can offer multiple readings which draw on diverse traditions and emphasise the rôle of the reader, rather than that of the omniscient teacher.'

Knees’ (*Ph.* 64–6).⁸⁶ On some occasions, the name of the constellation ‘goes up to heaven’ (as with that of Cepheus’ family – οὐρανὸν εἰς ὄνομα ἦλθεν 181, in a literalization of the Homeric phrase); with others, their fame seems to work top-down, reaching earth (cf. e.g. 172, of the Hyades: ‘their name is also very much spoken’). If collective memory and first-hand observation converge in the ‘sign’ provided by the Maiden constellation, it is with the Pleiades, as others have noted, that the poet calls attention to a mismatch between collective memory and visual evidence: the myth speaks of seven stars, but we see only six (256–63).⁸⁷

Another perspective is offered at the centre of the *Phaenomena*. The passage on the mortal namer of a bygone era (*Ph.* 367–85) explains how one of our predecessors ‘devised and contrived to call all [constellations] by names’ (374). It is framed with references to stars that are ‘nameless; they are not cast in any resemblance to the body of a well-defined figure’ (370–1, and cf. 384–5).⁸⁸ The tone is neutral, but its ring-composition is comparable to that of the Maiden passage, raising the possibility that these stars are nameless because some explanatory stories have been lost to us.⁸⁹ After all, it is not the case that all named constellations resemble a ‘well-defined figure’ – quite the reverse, as anyone who has looked at a star-map will testify, and in the rest of the *Phaenomena*, the knowledge of a story makes possible forgiving identifications of *odd* shapes, or half-shapes, as mythical figures.⁹⁰ At the same time, the passage allows that another astronomer could arise and group these stars into named shapes – we may think of Conon’s discovery of the Coma Berenices (Hyginus *Astr.* 2.24). We may also start to

⁸⁶ A deliberate choice, as Fakas (2001) 166–7 shows, for contemporary and later writers offer heroic identifications (the scholia on *Ph.* 69 list Heracles, Prometheus and Theseus among others).

⁸⁷ Martin (1998) on *Ph.* 256–63; Hunter (2004) 244.

⁸⁸ On the position of this passage, cf. Martin (1998) on these lines; on its chiasmic structure, cf. Kidd (1997) 318–19. For Pendergraft (1990), this passage is potentially problematic for a Stoic world-view, since it may be felt to contradict the power of Zeus asserted in the proem. Hunter (2004) 244 observes rather that for Aratus, ‘myth is a system partly in competition with other explanations’.

⁸⁹ On the nameless stars, cf. Hutchinson (1988) 218: ‘The disparity between physical glory and mythological obscurity yields a strange kind of half-pathos for the inanimate in their inanimation.’ Eudoxus fr. 28 made nothing of their not having a name.

⁹⁰ The limit case is Cassiopeia, who looks like a temple key (*Ph.* 192), but note also the half Horse (214) and the half-lit, backwards-towed *Argo* (343), with Volk (2010) 207.

become more aware of the role of Aratus himself in guiding our identifications.

The play with the relationship between visual and mythical 'evidence' in the *Phaenomena* extends into the second half of the poem, which brings to our notice the fact that the stars can be dramatically grouped in different ways to form different 'signs'. They are viewed first as constellations, then (*Ph.* 559–732) for the person watching for daybreak they are described in relation to the risings and settings of each sign of the Zodiac. At this point, several constellations reappear from the first half of the poem, notably Orion and Cassiopeia, whose mythical punishments at the hands of offended goddesses are now mentioned for the first time (644–6, 657–9). Here, perspectives of first-hand observation and mythical explanation recombine to 'explain' the fates of these figures. As Cassiopeia sets, her mythical image is literally subverted by her 'disorderly' tumble (οὐκέτι . . . κατὰ κόσμον) from heaven (654–7). Aratus' following reference to Cassiopeia's hope to rival Doris and Panope suggests that her 'penalty' is not to see Andromeda sacrificed, but to undergo a loss of dignity⁹¹ in a sort of reverse catasterism (657–9), a suggestion followed up by Aratus' translators.⁹² In the case of Orion, the explanatory force of his punishment from Artemis is spelt out: 'that is why they say (τοῦνεκα δὴ καὶ φασί) that when the Scorpion comes over the horizon, Orion flees' (645–6). Aratus here acknowledges and teases the reader's temptation to find morals, for the myth spills over onto characters nearby: the Scorpion puts to flight Andromeda *and* her Monster, who ought to have nothing to fear from him.⁹³

It may in fact be the continuity between myth and visual 'sign' in the account of the Maiden that prompts the reader to join in Aratus' game, invoking the first part of the poem to 'explain' the movements described in the second, and so to be ready to find

⁹¹ On the humour of this image, cf. Kidd (1997) 32 and on *Ph.* 656.

⁹² Germanicus *Aratus* 664–5: 'her beauty spoiled, with which she once vied with the daughters of the Old Man of the Sea'; Cicero explicitly presents Cassiopeia's setting as her *poena* (*Aratea* 446).

⁹³ Hutchinson (1988) 221: 'One myth intrudes grotesquely on another'. See also Hunter (2004) 243 on such 'paradox' found in the 'nightly drama of the heavens'.

morals in the settings of Cassiopeia and Orion. Indeed, one might reapply the myth of Δίκη to the re-appearance of the Maiden herself, arguing for a causal connection between the movement of the Argo and the rising of the Maiden into the heavens, which yields a ‘Hesiodic’ moral:

ἔλκων ἐξόπιθεν πρύμναν πολυτεϊρέος Ἀργοῦς·
 ἢ δὲ θέει γαίης ἱστὸν διχόωσα κατ’ αὐτόν,
 Παρθένος ἥμος ἅπασα περαιόθεν ἄρτι γένηται.

[the Dog rises,] towing behind it the stern of the many-starred Argo; the latter runs across the earth, bisected right at the mast, as soon as the Maiden appears completely over the horizon. (*Phaenomena* 604–6, trans. Kidd)

While Justice remained on earth, mankind did not yet go sailing (*Ph.* 110–11; cf. *WD* 236–7 on the Just City), so the appearance of the Maiden in the sky, as evidence of mankind’s degeneration, is licence for the Argo to set sail.⁹⁴ It is striking to note, however, that this is not the only way of connecting the Maiden’s rising and the movement of the Argo, for with this temporal conjunction in mind, the Maiden’s celestial position near a ‘conspicuous’ star (*Ph.* 136) has been interpreted relatively recently as an *anti*-Hesiodic signal of when to go sailing.⁹⁵ Her status as a ‘sign’ means that she can be appropriated differently by different viewers, depending on the resources they bring to bear on interpretation.

This point is reiterated in Aratus’ commentary on weather signs towards the end of the *Phaenomena*. These are many and varied,⁹⁶ and mean different things to different people. The poet differentiates the ways in which the farmer and the goatherd react to the flocks of birds which herald the summer, then comments:

ἄλλοθεν ἄλλοι
 ζώομεν ἄνθρωποι· τὰ δὲ πᾶρ ποσὶ πάντες ἐτοίμοι
 σήματ’ ἐπιγνώναί καὶ ἐξ αὐτίκα ποιήσασθαι.

⁹⁴ This kind of connection is explicitly made in Catullus 64.16–17, where the day that the Argo sailed was the last day of the Golden Age. Cf. Feeney (1998) 105.

⁹⁵ Cf. Rostropowicz (2003) 223–4. However, to see the Maiden purely as a time-signal, like the Pleiades, seems to miss the prominence of the story of Δίκη in the *Phaenomena*.

⁹⁶ On their variety, with a focus on its theological implications, see Bénatouil (2005) 133–43.

We ... mortals make a living in different ways; but all are only too ready⁹⁷ to recognise signs that are right beside us, and to adopt them for the moment. (*Phaenomena* 1,101–3, trans. Kidd)

Weather signs too require some prior knowledge, it seems; there follow details of how different men can predict events from their own areas of expertise – the shepherd from his sheep, herdsmen from cattle (1,104–17). Furthermore, the uncertainty of weather signs means that to be hopeful, you should find two signs that agree,⁹⁸ and to be confident, you need three (1,142–4). The constellation of the Maiden seems at first sight very different – it could work all on its own – yet it sets the discourse of interpretation in place.

With the Maiden in mind, then, Aratus' presentation of the phenomena makes clear that what the features of nature indicate depends on how and why the observer is looking at them. Indeed, as others have noted with reference to the *Phaenomena*'s famous 'gamma' acrostic λέπτη (*Ph.* 783–7), puns⁹⁹ and other 'letter play',¹⁰⁰ Aratus' poem not only encourages viewers to read and reread the sky but also prompts readers to view and re-view his poem, regrouping its elements to form new signs.

Moreover, 'much still is hidden, whereof Zeus, if he wishes, will give us signs anon' (*Ph.* 769–71, trans. Kidd).¹⁰¹ Zeus is kind to mortals, but this does not mean that everything signals clearly right now. The identities of some constellations are explicitly in doubt, several constellations have more than one name, many stars lack names and different forms of evidence can conflict. This is not to mention the wandering stars – the planets – which the *Phaenomena* does not treat at all, as the narrator points out, claiming to lack

⁹⁷ Kidd (1997) here cites a similar tone in Democritus for the ironic translation. This would chime in with my deliberately hesitant reading of the Maiden, *pace* Martin (1998) on this passage and Hunter (2004) 236, who read these lines as a serious comment about using experience of the past to be better prepared for the future.

⁹⁸ E.g. vv. 1,062–3: the farmer can find the same signs in the squill flower as in the fruit of the mastich.

⁹⁹ For bibliographic summary on the acrostics and puns in the poem, see Katz (2008), esp. 2–4.

¹⁰⁰ Volk (2012) 226–9 with evidence also from the poem's ancient receptions.

¹⁰¹ The Augustan Stoic poet Manilius changes this delicate balance of known and unknown in Aratus into an assertion that it is by the gift of the gods that humans did 'gain deeper knowledge of the heavens' (*Astr.* 1.25–33), where all is rationally mapped out – see Gale (2011).

confidence to deal with them (vv. 454–61).¹⁰² Conversely, some meteorological signs are too numerous to list (1,036).¹⁰³ By foregrounding such uncertainties and gaps in his account, Aratus’ poem draws attention to the role of the interpreter in creating evidence.¹⁰⁴

One further aspect of the *Phaenomena* to emerge from analysis of the Maiden is the movement between present, past and future involved in reading the signs, and indeed our broader experience of time.¹⁰⁵ The story of Δίκη is the most extended example of how aetiological constellations take the reader from present to past.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, if viewed as Δίκη, the Maiden in the sky also recalls her vivid prophecy to the Silver men and functions as a warning, a prompt to action, like the signs of weather in nature.¹⁰⁷

Having established the importance of the Maiden for the *Phaenomena*’s wider exploration of sign-reading, I now return to Aratus’ use of Hesiod in the *Phaenomena*. Building on Aratus’ implicit equation between the world of the sky and the world of the poem, I shall demonstrate that reminiscences of Hesiodic didaxis in the story of Δίκη are key to understanding the basis on which Aratus conceives of his own authority to teach the will of Zeus.

4.3 Hesiod in the *Phaenomena*

4.3a Sounds like ‘Hesiod’?

In response to my emphasis on the doubts inscribed in reading the sign of the Maiden, it might be argued that the poet offers

¹⁰² Hunter (2008b) 164–6 argues that this is because they lack *kósmos*: ‘Aratus stresses their “uncertainty” in order to emphasize the fixed certainty of what he actually does describe . . . eliminating uncertainty not only from the poem, but also from the world itself.’ On my reading, Aratus’ *recusatio* on the planets is rather to be seen as one of the ways in which the poem raises the question of ‘fixed certainty’.

¹⁰³ Bénatouil (2005) 144.

¹⁰⁴ Compare Goldhill (1994) 223 on the ‘discourse of viewing’ in the Hellenistic period: ‘exploring ways of *seeing meaning*’ was becoming ‘self-consciously and ironically a subject for poetry itself’.

¹⁰⁵ For Gee (2013) ch. 1, Aratus’ combination of Hesiodic and Empedoclean sources in this passage raises questions about the nature of time itself as linear or cyclical.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Harder (2003) on this process in Callimachus’ *Aetia*.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Asper (2009) 4–6 on Callimachus’ manipulation of weather signs as prophetic narratives in the *Hecale*.

guidance to his post-Golden readers; the narrative frame makes clear the 'right answer', that this is Justice speaking. The Maiden mingles infrequently and reluctantly with the people of the Silver era (ἄργυρέω ... ὀλίγη τε καὶ οὐκέτι πάμπαν ἑτοίμη / ὠμίλει *Ph.* 115–16). Moreover, the narrator calls her Δίκη in relating her hatred of the Bronze generation (133). Therefore, Aratus' (right-thinking) readers will surely 'recognize' the sign of the Maiden constellation as an advocate for justice precisely from her evident unhappiness in the Silver Age and her realization, within the myth, that she cannot influence the unjust Bronze race. This would replicate the way in which the speaker in the *Works and Days* is, for the external audience, a convincing paragon of justice outside his metallic myth, able even to be cynical about it,¹⁰⁸ *because* within the myth he expresses discomfort at the injustice of his 'Iron age' contemporaries (cf. above p. 87):

Μηκέτ' ἔπειτ' ὠφελλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι μετεῖναι
ἀνδράσιν, ἄλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι.
νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον..

If only then I did not have to live among the fifth men, but could either have died first or been born afterwards! For now the race is indeed one of iron. (*Works and Days* 174–6, trans. Most)

In both the *Phaenomena* and the *Works and Days*, the speaker's contextual loss of authority is what enables the external audience to detach itself from the audience within the myth and to credit the speaker with moral authority. Indeed, Aratus was not alone among Hellenistic poets in picking up this discontented Hesiodic voice as one of moral regret. We may compare the more compressed reminiscence of *WD* 174–6 as 'Zeitkritik' to open Callimachus fragmentary *Iambus* 3;¹⁰⁹ the speaker there proceeds to undermine with more material concerns Hesiod's bleakness about contemporary prospects for virtue. Aratus, however, does not

¹⁰⁸ *WD* 270–2: νῦν δὲ ἐγὼ μῆτ' αὐτὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιος / εἶην ... εἰ μείζω γε δίκην ἀδικώτερος ἔξει. West (1978) on *WD* 270–2 notes the bitter play with the δικ- stem. In replaying the ἐγὼ of *WD* 174, the conceptual times of the 'myth of the races' and of Hesiod's portrait of the Maiden Justice can be considered identical, providing one justification for Aratus' fusion of the two passages.

¹⁰⁹ 'I wish I lived, Lord Apollo, when I was not [yet] around': εἴθ' ἦν, ἀναξ ὦπολλον, ἡνίκ' οὐκ ἦα (fr. 193.1 Pfeiffer).

thus caricature the *Works and Days* as a uniformly negative view of the contemporary world. Rather, his story emphasizes that in the present era, humans are responsible for negotiating and decoding the ‘will of Zeus’.

While this decidedly ‘Hesiodic’ point encourages Aratus’ readers to identify the Maiden with Justice, the narrative presentation leaves them some interpretative work to do. The direct speech pulls readers into the story alongside the Silver people, whose reaction, as we have seen, gives little clue as to what (if anything) they have taken from the Maiden’s appearance, reprimand and doom-laden utterance.¹¹⁰ And while the verbal parallels between the Maiden in the Golden Age and Zeus in the proem encourage us to hear an exhortation that fulfils the proem’s description of how Zeus ‘speaks’ (*Ph.* 6–9), the voice highlighted within the story is not the Maiden’s ‘song’ (ῥεῖδειν *Ph.* 107) urging justice, but her threats addressed to the Silver men. There is a distinct contrast between the Maiden’s plain assertions of future carnage and misery, and the proem’s portrait of Zeus, who ‘benignly (ῥήπιος) presents helpful signs to men’ (*Ph.* 5–6).

Therefore, to read the presence of her constellation in the sky today as a positive exhortation forces acknowledgement of a shift in didactic modes between the past and present and, I suggest, opens up a question about the degree of continuity between the didactic modes of Hesiod and Aratus. Models for the tone of the Maiden’s address to the Silver Age have been sought among the four- or five-line speeches in Homer or Hesiod,¹¹¹ but this approach does not sit well with the way in which Aratus’ ‘myth of Δίκη’ refers to wider aspects of the *Works and Days* and other Hesiodic poems. Moreover, to look for a single source is already to interpret the Maiden’s speech as a particular *kind* of utterance,¹¹²

¹¹⁰ A lack of recognition would not be unusual for an epiphany. Cf. Callimachus *Hymn to Apollo* 9: Apollo appears not to all, but to whoever is worthy (ὠπλόων οὐ παντὶ φαίνεται, ἀλλ’ ὅτις ἐσθλός).

¹¹¹ Kidd (1997) on *Ph.* 123–6: ‘presumably’ modelled on Zeus’ threatening Prometheus at *WD* 54–8: ‘Both speeches predict trouble for future generations.’ An echo of Zeus would not be amiss in his daughter’s voice, but his threat of personal action to pay back Prometheus for his crime finds no parallel in the Maiden’s speech.

¹¹² Cf. West (2000) 159 on how interpretation of any text is closely linked to a view of its genre. More broadly, cf. Conte (1994) 112: ‘in order to be perceived, the world must take on a form, become a model of meaning’. This formulation has peculiar resonance in the case of the Maiden.

such as a threat, when in fact its beginning might be considered equally a reprimand or a cry of despair – ‘What an inferior generation your golden fathers left behind!’ (*Ph.* 123).

More successful views of the Maiden's ‘Hesiodism’ are those that recognize her status as a wider symbol of ‘Hesiodic teaching’. On one recent account, the Maiden combines different Hesiodic resonances: in the Golden Age she evokes the ‘Just King’ of Hesiod's *Theogony* (*Th.* 81–93 on the respect for the king who makes judgements at popular assemblies); in the Silver Age, ‘her voice as she warns ... of the trouble ahead resembles ... that of “Hesiod” himself speaking to the men of his own day’ (see especially the predictions of wars and suffering, *WD* 189, 200).¹¹³ We should add that her presentation in these two eras is also interestingly reminiscent of Hesiod's Muses, with whom the figure of Hesiod was particularly associated in the Hellenistic period; likewise daughters of Zeus, they were both ‘singing’ (ᾄδον *Th.* 75; cf. ῥεῖδεν *Ph.* 107) and addressing a mortal disdainfully from the mountains (*Th.* 26–8). The Muses gave Hesiod the power to tell of τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα (*Th.* 32), so perhaps the voices of ‘Hesiod’ and the ‘Muses’ are here deliberately combined.¹¹⁴

If the Maiden's speech is felt to capture the rhetorical force of ‘Hesiod’ in both the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* itself as a speech to Perses and the kings,¹¹⁵ her prominent use of the future tense is revealing. It may reflect wider interests in prophecy, evident in Hellenistic poetry,¹¹⁶ but this does not ‘explain’ the rhetorical force of the Maiden's speech; in fact, it distracts from it. Rather, I should argue, the Maiden's position is akin to that of

¹¹³ Hunter (2004) 241, citing the political reading of Schiesaro (1996) for the assertion that Aratus explores the link between kingship and poetry, with contemporary resonance.

¹¹⁴ See now Gee (2013) 33–5 building on the resonances of ῥεῖδεν. Certainly a Hesiodic tradition had developed around this idea; cf. Solon singing (ᾠδὴν fr. 1 West) to rebuke his fellow citizens. On the sources for Hesiod's celebrated association with the Muses in this period, see Hurst and Schachter (1996).

¹¹⁵ Lardinois (2003) building on Schmidt (1986) points out that the structure of the *Works and Days* reflects that of an angry Homeric speech, in which initial invocations are followed by paradigmatic advice and then direct advice peppered with insults. Does Aratus, in making Δίκη play ‘Hesiod’, condense the *Works and Days* ‘back’ into a rebuke?

¹¹⁶ Cf. e.g. West (2000) for an example of the contemporary popularity of prediction as a narrative form, especially *post euentum* prophecies that worked to praise a current ruler.

‘Hesiod’ among the Iron men and her prophecy, like his, refers beyond the end of the story, such that Aratus’ use of the prophetic voice in his rewriting implicitly asserts the centrality of the ‘myth of the races’ to the *Works and Days* and in turn to the emphasis common to the wider Hesiodic corpus, on the supremacy of the will of Zeus.

4.3b *Sign of the times*

These Hesiodic backgrounds could be mobilized in different ways to stimulate Aratus’ own didactic voice. On one level, this echo of Hesiod contrasts vividly with Aratus’ own voice in the *Phaenomena*. In its immediate context, Δίκη’s speech is inscribed as a failure of didactic (cf. [ch. 6](#) below); traditional understandings of the difference between Hesiod and Aratus as teachers might therefore argue that Aratus has incorporated within his poem a ‘Hesiodic’ provocation for his own mode, which does not assume the understanding and trust of its addressees, but rather focuses on empowering them to read the celestial signs for themselves.¹¹⁷

Others have found evidence for a deliberately ‘non-Hesiodic’ voice in Aratus’ *recusatio* on the planets: οὐδ’ ἔτι θαρσαλέος κείνων ἐγὼ (*Ph.* 460).¹¹⁸ His claim not to be confident about the planets, disingenuous though it may be,¹¹⁹ certainly recalls by contrast Hesiod’s declaration of authority to speak about sailing despite his lack of personal expertise (*WD* 648–9, trans. Most). In Hesiod, as I noted in [ch. 1](#) (pp. 18–19) and [ch. 2](#) (pp. 86–7), the speaker’s provocative self-characterization is immediately nuanced by the memory of his single short voyage from Aulis to Chalchis, where he won a poetic competition and thanked the Muses who had inspired him at Helicon.

¹¹⁷ On the difference between the antagonistic mode of ‘Hesiod’ and the encouraging mode of Aratus see first Bing (1993).

¹¹⁸ E.g. Semanoff (2006) views this as a strategy to reduce the distance between teacher and student.

¹¹⁹ Kidd (1997) on *Ph.* 460 notes that Aratus is credited with having written a work on the planets. For Germanicus, speaking about the planets is merely a matter of time and effort (*tempus et ipse labor*, Germ. *Aratus* 445); he proceeds to do this in the second part of his poem.

It is striking, then, that aspects of Hesiod's attitude to sailing are recalled in the *Phaenomena* by Aratus' own first-person expression of preferences when it comes to sailing (*Ph.* 152–5) and in wider wariness of the sea (introducing the weather signs, *Ph.* 758–64).¹²⁰ The effect is to recall the range of authorities behind the 'Hesiodic' voice within the *Works and Days* (among the Iron men, he speaks from bitter experience, but later, lacking any practical competence in sailing, he works purely from poetic knowledge in order to instruct Perses). Alternatively, we may speak of the variety of voices legitimately labelled 'Hesiodic'. We recall again that Hesiod 'authored' the *Theogony* as well as the *Works and Days*, and Aratus' own poem pays homage to both; echoes of the *Theogony* too may be 'read' right from the first verse of the *Phaenomena* (*Ph.* 1 ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεθα echoes *Th.* 1 and 36).

Such, I think, is the multifaceted image of 'Hesiod' recalled too by the various voices of the Maiden, whose appearance in the sky after Δίκη's departure signals both continuity and rupture between past and present. Compare an analysis of the Maiden's significance which reads the Golden Age as the realization of Hesiod's exhortation to justice (the Just City), places weight on the Maiden's flight to heaven and views her continuing 'appearance' as a signal of the inspiration that Aratus took from his predecessor along with the didactic baton.¹²¹ Taking our cue from this, it is worth exploring some ways in which Aratean didaxis not only *echoes* that of Hesiod but also treats Hesiodic poetry as part of the world to be interpreted.¹²²

If the story is mapped onto Hesiod's races narrative stage for stage, Aratus' readers will be aware that there remain for them two races; 'more just' heroes and corrupted Iron men, whose juxtaposition in Hesiod articulated most clearly the contrast between δίκη and ὕβρις that emerges from the metallic myth (see 2.6 above). Yet Aratus' restructuring of the metallic myth simultaneously

¹²⁰ Hunter (2014) 58: 'Sailing, in fact, seems to be one of the subjects which notably brings out "the Hesiodic" in Aratus, and this is a marker of how it had become a touchstone of the Hesiodic tradition.'

¹²¹ Fakas (2001) 171–5. Compare the resurrection of Hipponax in Callimachus' *Iambi* to signal the mode and embody the qualities of his poetry – cf. Fantuzzi (2004) 8–17 with bibliography.

¹²² Compare Nagy (1990b) 222 on the *Iliad* as a σῆμα representing the will of Zeus.

refocuses attention on the Silver people as those between Gold and Bronze, who could develop either way.¹²³ The Maiden's direct speech brings out their dual potential as didactic addressees, confirming their resonance for Perses in the *Works and Days*. Perses is not a Golden Age man; he is not beyond hope, but he has already committed some crimes and must be forcefully dissuaded from deteriorating further. Aratus' readers are made to pause between the Golden Age and the rapid decline into the Bronze era (a pause further brought out before the final stage in Germanicus' translation).¹²⁴ The Maiden's voice turns to vivid prophecy at the moment when she, like Hesiod, really needs to persuade her audience.¹²⁵

Through his Maiden's different ways of dealing with the different generations, Aratus recalls for the reader the fact that the speaker's choice of mode in the *Works and Days* depends on the state of the audience. Hesiod's poem is not without messages of hope, but they are constructed differently at different times, according to the rhetoric of the message for Perses and the kings. In outlining exhortations to Justice, for example, Hesiod asserts that Zeus 'gave justice to men', contrasting the mutual cruelty of the birds and fishes (*WD* 279–80). From this viewpoint, Aratus' account makes the presence of Δίκη, if not conditional, at least more distant. From another angle, however, Aratus effectively glosses the conclusion to Hesiod's story of Pandora in the *Works and Days*; the fact that the Maiden 'still appears' in heaven is equivalent to the presence of Hope, the one 'defence against evil' remaining in Pandora's box (*WD* 96–9).¹²⁶

¹²³ For Schiesaro (1996) 12, direct speech indicates that the Silver men could redress their behaviour.

¹²⁴ Germanicus *Aratus* 133–4: 'after the bronze race were given to the earth [*pace* Gain and others, I interpret *terris data* as 'buried'; cf. Hesiod's expression, 'the earth covered them'], the seeds of virtue, overwhelmed by vice, could no longer resist it [*nec iam / semina uirtutis uitii demersa resistunt*]'.

¹²⁵ Nongbri (2003) examines the rhetorical use of apocalyptic language in exhortation in Hebrews 6.4–12. Compare the sudden shift into the register of 'blessings and curses' in the course of Philo's (strikingly Hesiodic) *On Rewards and Punishments*, with Mack (1991).

¹²⁶ Such a fusion of the conclusions of Pandora and the races works subtly to highlight their aetiological equivalence in Hesiod. See above ch. 2, with Beall (1989). Theognis vv. 1,135–46, on the *departure* of Hope, offers an earlier fusion. These two fusions may act as a precedent for Ovid's rather different combination of the two Hesiodic myths at *Met.* 1.129–31; see p. 250 below.

The other 'positive' argument gleaned from the *Works and Days* is that all is not yet lost. If read with the idea that her prophecy refers beyond the present, the Maiden's current appearance as a constellation¹²⁷ gives new weight to the statement, in the Hesiodic account of the present era, that some good will still have been left to mortals (*WD* 179: ἄλλ' ἔμπης καὶ τοῖσι μεμείξεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν cf. *WD* 271–3). The duration of this period, however, depends on the mortals themselves. Here, one could argue that the *Phaenomena* puts a self-reflexive spin on the Hesiodic 'didactic plot' by pointing to the possibility and necessity of *rereading*; as long as readers can keep in mind the story of the Maiden, the crucial knowledge that enables mortals to recognize her will hold off the day of doom.¹²⁸ In this role, the *Phaenomena* becomes akin to the *Works and Days* as ἀλκή (*WD* 201), providing the knowledge essential for avoiding the anger of the gods.¹²⁹

4.4 Conclusion: didactic ramifications

Aratus' myth of Δίκη, I have argued, is constructed in part to fill the gap between Hesiod and Aratus as didactic voices. Its blend of continuity and rupture is neatly expressed by the change from ἔτερο[ς] . . . λόγο[ς] to ἄλλος λόγος. What Hesiod presented synchronically (himself versus the many who struggle to understand the will of Zeus), Aratus presents diachronically with the idea that the Maiden's departure gives rise to our need for 'signs'. In this respect, the Maiden functions as a 'Muse' of a different kind, insofar as her story provokes Aratus' own didactic project.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Cicero's translation elaborates the brightness of the Maiden (*splendenti corpore*, fr. XVI.6).

¹²⁸ Cf. Fowler (2000) 211: 'the rhetorical drive within didactic that focuses on the end, the achievement of knowledge . . . [versus] the claims of a didactic poem as a poem to be reread and reinterpreted'.

¹²⁹ Contrast the more negative allusion to Aratus at Horace *Ode* 3.6.46–8, a more final sentence on his contemporaries. Hunter (2004) 231 places the emphasis rather on the *Phaenomena*'s role as a τεκμήριον from Zeus, in contrast to the *Works and Days* as 'the necessary product of hard times'.

¹³⁰ Gee (2013) finds in Aratus' account the Muse of his new discourse, astronomical poetry, comparing Plato's juxtaposition of capricious Muses and 'Hesiod's races' in *Republic* 8 to prompt his own development of a new 'philosophical' discourse – see my ch. 3 above.

Yet, as the first part of the chapter emphasized, the Maiden's own commemorative and exhortative function as a sign insists on the relevance of a 'traditional' belief in her power. Both in testing the perspective of the observers and in foregrounding the issue of narrative authority, Aratus' account of the Maiden directs readers into the narrative logic of the *Phaenomena*, where naming the stars, ἀστρονομία, functions as a means of exploring what it is to write a didactic poem in a world of technical treatises and fields of specialist knowledge.

I have also shown how for Aratus, Hesiodic poetry, and particularly the *Works and Days*, is itself part of the world to be interpreted. The greater our knowledge of Hesiod, in fact, the more complex becomes our understanding of the Maiden, and vice versa, for the Maiden prompts readers to look back to Hesiod. The Maiden as a constellation only means something to those who (think they) know her story. Aratus' fusion of *WD* 106–201 and 213–85 suggests a degree of kinship between the 'myth of the races' and the following αἶνος about the hawk and the nightingale,¹³¹ addressed to 'kings who themselves understand' (*WD* 202), as stories that demand interpretation,¹³² even as it also asserts the *moral* relevance of the myth of the races to the contemporary choice between justice and injustice.

From the centrality of the Maiden narrative, argued in this chapter, Aratus may be described as scientific 'demonstrator' of the process of interpreting phenomena in the universe, the Hesiodic poems among them. The φαινόμενα are, by definition, apparent to everyone, but Aratus' didactic persona is one who has tried out what might now be termed a 'science' of reading poetry. He does not evaluate Hesiod as a model of technical instruction (for example, in how to make a plough, *WD* 420–34), but appropriates the Hesiodic form of address to farmers and sailors to

¹³¹ Cf. Schiesaro (1996) 11–12, who sees in Aratus recognition of the affinity between the helpless figures of Hesiod, Justice and the Nightingale in the *Works and Days*.

¹³² Relevant here is the doubt, noted on p. 63 above, whether this expresses a Pindaric idea of addressing only those who understand (*Ol.* 2.83–5), or affirms intent to address those who *think* they already know.

avoid picking out a particular body of knowledge,¹³³ and gives weight to the story of Δίκη. Aratus' translators and imitators signalled their recognition of how Aratus' story of the Maiden, roughly a hundred lines into the poem, gives the metallic myth within the *Works and Days* the status of a 'second proem',¹³⁴ renewing and explaining the way in which it focuses attention on the basic processes required for negotiating the contemporary world. The interpretation of Hesiod's 'myth of the races' in its narrative context functions within the *Phaenomena* as a test case of how a viewer could transform distinct phenomena into pieces of evidence for a larger interpretation.¹³⁵ In this context, the framing uncertainty about this figure is emblematic of the difficulty of reading Hesiodic poetry in the world (in) which Aratus is writing.

Considering Aratus in this double role of 'earlier reader' and himself 'writer', it is a short step to compare the way in which he has described the signs for his readers to the activity of the Mortal Namer at the centre of his poem (*Ph.* 367–85).¹³⁶ The analogy is made attractive also by the resonances of ἐφρόσατο as 'communicate through signs', including those of writing.¹³⁷ Others have noted the metapoetic potential of some similes in the poem, especially a surprising assertion that the cosmos resembles a sphere constructed by a *human* craftsman (*Ph.* 529–33).¹³⁸ Volk has recently suggested the implications of this simile may be recognized in another significant piece of contemporary praise, from Leonidas of Tarentum, who terms

¹³³ Cf. Hunter (2004) 231 on how the *Phaenomena* exploits the post-Hesiodic idea of farming and sailing as 'paradigmatic for all human activity' as well as being (now) fields of expertise.

¹³⁴ Each passage is situated a little into the poem and underpins the technical instruction that follows. Germanicus heightens this sense by invoking the Maiden directly (*Aratus* 98: *quam te, diua, uocem?*). Cf. Virgil (*Geo.* 1.121–59) on the work ethic of the world under Jupiter, and pp. 144–5 above on Plato.

¹³⁵ Schiesaro (1996) clearly describes Aratus' fusion of *WD* 108–201 with 256–62 as an 'organic' whole.

¹³⁶ Cf. Gee (2000) 84; for Hunter (2004) 230, the Namer is a figure for the reader of Aratus' poem.

¹³⁷ For detailed discussion of Aratus' lexical choices in the context of this analogy, see Volk (2012).

¹³⁸ E.g. Cusset (2006) 65–6.

Aratus a ‘second Zeus’ (Διὸς . . . δεύτερος *Palatine Anthology* 9.25.5–6), precisely because of his writing:

γράμμα τόδ’ Ἀρήτοιο δαήμονος, ὅς ποτε λεπτῇ
φροντίδι δηναίους ἀστέρας ἐφράσσατο.

This is the writing of learned Aratus, who once with a subtle mind distinguished the eternal stars. Leonidas 101 (Gow-Page) = *Palatine Anthology* 9.25.1–2, trans. Volk (2012)

The texture of the *Phaenomena* itself supports Leonidas’ analogy, as Volk notes: various forms of ‘letter play’, waiting for centuries to be (re)discovered in Aratus’ text, exemplify the hidden signs of Zeus of which Aratus warns us (*Ph.* 768–82).¹³⁹ Aratus has ‘updated’ for the literate world Hesiod’s descriptions of the πανάριστος (*WD* 293) and the pious tracker of signs from Zeus, whom we suspect refers best of all to the poet himself.

Within the *Phaenomena*, then, the Maiden prompts us to look again at the role of the poet, and opens a debate about the meaning and relevance of Hesiod’s poetry. Such a debate had already arisen in other forms in other contexts (for Plato, see [ch. 3](#) above), but the extent to which Aratus has been credited with – and blamed for – the course of the metallic narrative’s subsequent reception in antiquity makes it particularly urgent now to emphasize that Aratus’ reading of Hesiod is not framed as definitive. This chapter has found in the *Phaenomena* the stimulus to continue engaging with Hesiod’s myth in relation to contemporary concerns; in this context, we may think above all of Virgil’s *Georgics*, his enigmatic *Ascraeum carmen* for Rome, but even in the three surviving translations of the *Phaenomena*, what is worthy of note is not their faithfulness to their source but the way in which they each develop a distinct aesthetic programme by ‘rereading’ Aratus in very different contexts.¹⁴⁰ In the following chapter, I shall begin from these texts in sketching out

¹³⁹ Volk (2012) 232 further suggests that following Aratus’ promise to begin ‘from Zeus’ (*Ph.* 1), we may compare his subtle ‘signature’ (ἀρρητον *Ph.* 2) with the constellation of the Triangle (*Ph.* 234–5), strikingly described (first) by Aratus as Δελτωτόν – in the shape of a ‘Delta’.

¹⁴⁰ See first Lewis (1986), Zehnacker (1989) on all three poets, Bellandi *et al.* (2001) on Germanicus and Avienus, Kubiak (1981) on Cicero, Possanza (2004) on Germanicus, Soubiran (1981) on Avienus.

further dimensions of the response to Hesiod's races in Rome. Re-emphasizing Schiesaro's judgement of Aratus (Schiesaro 1996: 24) as 'a very important stage for the *interpretation* of Hesiod [my italics]', this book now claims that Aratus' bold re-inscription of Hesiod's metallic narrative in his own universe prompts further, and different, appropriations of Hesiod's poetry in Roman literature.

CHAPTER 5

HESIOD *AD MEA TEMPORA* IN OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

5.1 Introduction: backgrounds

5.1a *The races at Rome*

The second-longest surviving version of the ‘myth of the races’ after Hesiod, and by far the most famous, takes up 61 verses a little way into Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, whose 15 books of hexameters incorporate 250 individual stories into one continuous poem. Among the echoes of numerous Greek and Roman writers, Hesiod’s influence is prominent especially in the opening account of the world’s creation, which, by way of a four-stage narrative of metallic races, is transformed into an account of divine destruction. Evocations of themes from the *Works and Days* within this startling shift have not yet been given due attention, even by scholars noting large- and small-scale reworkings of Hesiod in this first movement of the poem.¹ At the other end of the poem, the metallic myth is briefly invoked twice more in a 400-line didactic speech attributed to Pythagoras; in each context, as I shall show, Pythagoras seems both to deny and to assert the actuality of a lost ‘golden age’. Reading together Ovid’s different presentations of the story in their respective contexts, I shall argue that the treatment of the ‘myth of the races’ in the *Metamorphoses* guides us to this poem’s wider use of the Hesiodic corpus to characterize the convoluted literary tradition capped by Ovid’s own poem.

There are various backgrounds to Ovid’s use of the metallic myth in the *Metamorphoses*. We should not forget that Lucretius and Virgil, Ovid’s immediate predecessors in rewriting Hesiodic material at Rome, do *not* present human history in metallic terms as

¹ Ziogas (2013) 1 announces his focus on Ovid’s response to Hesiod as poet of the *Theogony* and *Catalogue of Women*. He treats Books 1–2 in ch. 2, but does not consider Pythagoras.

'once and for all' set pieces. Virgil, as I emphasized in this book's [first chapter](#), blends allusions to the Hesiodic and Aratean contexts for this tradition throughout the first two books of the *Georgics*. Others have shown how his poetry constantly evokes, but then questions or retracts, notions of 'Golden' ages.² The story's centrality as a reference point for Virgil is in part a reply to Lucretius, whose concern is to 'debunk'³ the myth of a 'Golden age' in communicating the Epicurean view of the world, based on atoms and void. Lucretius presents a history of humankind in *De rerum natura* 5, with close reference to details in Hesiod, but its thematic organization into arenas of human activity (technological advances, religion, language) keeps the whole narrative moving back and forth in time, blurs boundaries between stages (changes came 'gradually', *minutatim* 1,293), and so helps to prevent readers' judging any one period of civilization better or worse than another. According to Lucretius, 'there is no point at which perfect harmony exists';⁴ indeed, to forestall any suggestion of a divine plan for humanity, he altogether abandons evaluative or descriptive labels, metallic or otherwise, for past communities, proclaiming insignificant the changes of circumstance between present and past (such as the discovery and use of metals, *DRN* 5.1,241–96).⁵

In terms of the landscape behind the story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, these authors' detailed (and repeated) engagements with Hesiod's version stand out from Roman assertions of moral decline modelled on Aratus' account of increasingly unjust generations of men.⁶ The immense popularity of Aratus' *Phaenomena* in antiquity, evident in the number of attested translations and commentaries (see above [ch. 4 n. 16](#)), is reflected also in literary reminiscences. One notable reworking of the Maiden

² E.g. Perkell (2002). ³ As Gale (1994) 168 puts it.

⁴ So Evans (2008) 164 notes on *DRN* 5.1,019–27, humankind's first 'softening' into civilization.

⁵ Bronze used to be more honoured than gold, but 'so rolling time alters the seasons of things' (5.1,276).

⁶ See however Gee (2013) chs. 3–4: Lucretius read Cicero's *Aratea*. Lucretius' only admitted turning point in history, Epicurus' defiance of *Religio* looming over mortals from above, inverts Aratus' account of the Maiden's departure skyward after mortals ignore her threats (Johnston (1980) 30–2).

passage is found Horace's *Ode* 3.6, which addresses a contemporary Roman, lamenting the depravities of the current times, 'prolific in evil' (*fecunda culpa saecula* 3.6.17) by contrast with the bravery of the ancestors who fought the Punic wars (3.6.33–44). In the concluding stanza, the virtue of these ancestors too is denigrated by comparison with their fathers; all bear children worse than themselves, including our own – our offspring will be 'still more base' (*progeniem uitiosiore* 3.6.48). This stanza, recalling the reproach given to the Silver generation by the Maiden in Aratus' poem, before she flees to the heavens to become a constellation, in retrospect casts Horace's whole poem as a Roman revision and expansion of her warning.

In his earlier *Epodes*, Horace put a different spin on the assertion of a steady moral decline through generations, by reapplying to it the material of the memorable twist in Hesiod's account; the introduction of the race of Heroes which, unlike the metallic races, is 'more just and better' (*WD* 158). *Epode* 16 is an impassioned exhortation to the Roman people to emigrate to the Blessed Isles, away from a city racked by civil war. A sequence of gold, bronze and iron closes the poem, as the speaker recalls how Jupiter 'downgraded the golden age with bronze, then hardened the generations with iron' (*inquinauit aere tempus aureum; / aere, dehinc ferro duravit saecula* 16.64–5). The rapidity of this sequence reinforces the urgency of the opening ('Now a second age is ground down by civil wars' (*altera iam teritur bellis ciuilibus aetas* 16.1)), and the short window for escape 'while the omens are good' (16.24: *secunda / ... alite*). The historical tendency towards decline is set in opposition to the timelessness promised on the 'blessed fields'⁷ with their reassuringly repeated fertility (16.43–5: 'every year [*quotannis*] the land unploughed yields grain / and vines, through unpruned, always flower [*floret usque*] / and the olive shoots never fail [*numquam fallentis*]'). Usually understood as a pessimistic response to the apparent optimism of Virgil's *Eclogue* 4, Horace's address to potential 'heroes' in *Epode* 16 has been taken to be 'patently utopian'; given the influence of Pindar's

⁷ See Oliensis (1998) 97: the poem 'imagines sailing right out of history'.

rewriting of the Blessed Isles as a place for the righteous after death (*Olympian* 2.67–88), the Horatian narrator's encouragement to emigrate en masse may even be a coded recommendation of suicide.⁸

Beyond Horace, the most detailed revisions of the metallic story at Rome are found in the three (semi-)surviving Latin translations of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, adduced at points in the [previous chapter](#). Their versions of the races narrative have been mined for clues to the wider cultural position from which each author is translating Aratus' poem. Sadly we do not possess the translation by Varro Atax; another that may have influenced Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is Cicero's *Aratea*, preserved only in fragmentary quotations in his own treatises *On the Nature of the Gods* and *On Divination*. Only three fragments survive from Cicero's translation of the races narrative.⁹ Particular weight has been put on *Aratea* fr. XVII Buescu (*malebant tenui contenti uiuere cultu* – 'they preferred to live content with a modest way of life') as a 'philosophical recodification' of Aratus' Golden Age as life in accordance with nature.¹⁰ Another fragment (fr. XVIII Buescu) refers to a feature not found in Aratus, the 'sudden springing up' of an 'iron brood' (*ferrea tum uero proles exorta repentest*);¹¹ this may find an echo in Ovid's detailed account (see pp. 218–219 below). With Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in view, the most valuable point which has been made in relation to the Ciceronian fragments is that in the wake of Aratus, Cicero's handling of *Dikē*'s catasterism indicates his engagement in 'the nascent debate between

⁸ On the ways in which it may be seen as a response to Virgil's *Eclogue* 4, cf. Du Quesnay (1976). On the 'golden life' 'on the far side of the grave' or of the world, see Mankin (1995) 262; for utopias in Roman literature, see Evans (2008). Watson (2003) 479–85 notes the bleakness of *Epode* 16 and offers a good survey of possible sources for its 'complex literary weave'.

⁹ Soubiran (1972) 90–1 posits that this passage was extensively developed in Cicero's translation.

¹⁰ Barchiesi (1981) 186–7 on the 'cultural distance' from Aratus posits Dicaearchus' legacy; Landolfi (1990) 90 (with schol. on *Ph.* 110) suggests Cicero read ἀϋτως δ' ἔζωον as equivalent to ἀπλῶς.

¹¹ Landolfi (1990) 93 sees this as a 'replacement' of Aratus' Bronze Age, reasonably so given that they are allocated the crimes of killing and eating oxen. We may be missing sources, however; Goldberg (1995) has shown that Cicero's other poetic translations are firmly grounded in early Roman epic.

primitivism and progressivism which divided intellectuals under the Republic'.¹²

As a means of expressing an opinion on whether (and why) times had become better or worse, even such direct and oblique engagements with Aratus' narrative are not as frequent in extant Roman poetry as is the basic contrast between gold and iron. The 'high and sudden density of reference' to the Golden Age in Augustan Rome¹³ picks up a theme that developed early on into a tradition floating largely free of Hesiod. Nostalgia for the Golden Age¹⁴ is deployed for many different ends; in Tibullus, for example, gold is connected with an unrecoverable, private rural idyll, and iron with current urban decay, each image rewritten from the perspective of the elegiac lover.¹⁵ But for scholars approaching Ovid's accounts of the myth, the main reference points are the versions that put Augustus at the centre, making the emperor the architect of the Golden Age.¹⁶ For this idea, the *locus classicus* is in Virgil *Aeneid* 6, Anchises' introduction of Augustus in the parade of future heroes in the underworld:

*Augustus Caesar; diui genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arua
Saturno quondam*

Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will found golden times again in Latium amid fields once ruled by Saturn. (*Aeneid* 6.792–4)

This presentation is, of course, only the most straightforward of several different Virgilian constructions of the Golden time focused on such a figurehead (cf. *Aeneid* 8.319–24). *Eclogue* 4 is markedly

¹² Landolfi (1990) 97. Manilius, whose astronomical poem structurally echoes that of Aratus, clearly engages in a later stage of this debate; he substitutes for this excursus a more optimistic account of human civilization in rationalistic terms. On this passage see Abry (2007) and Gale (2011).

¹³ Barker (1993) 5. Cf. Feeney (2007) 112: 'the myth of a fall from a Golden Age to an Iron Age comes to be the great Roman myth'.

¹⁴ Harrison (2005) surveys the material in the context of the theme of national decline.

¹⁵ E.g. Saturn in 2.3.69–70 presided over an era of free love. On the theme of the Golden Age in Tibullus, see Newman (1998). For a good discussion of 1.3.35–48, see Lee-Stecum (1998) 113–20. For Tibullus' more extensive play with Hesiodic themes, see first Grimal (1962), although the recorded post-paper discussion challenges his case for direct influence.

¹⁶ See Wallace-Hadrill (1982). On the politics of periodization in Roman poetry, cf. Ahl (1984a) 42–64.

more ambiguous, with its prophecy of an imminent return of the Golden Age, corresponding to the birth of a child, nuanced by a caution that another Heroic Age will precede it (vv. 8–9, 31–6). Virgil's complex blend of sources here¹⁷ exposes by contrast the sense that the later politicization of the 'myth of the races' tradition for mass consumption depends on its simplification into a contrast between gold and iron. (Intermediate races would cloud the message that Augustus is putting the world to rights.) It seems fair, at any rate, to observe that Roman writers, whether propagating, reflecting and/or criticizing Imperial appropriations of these 'golden times' (*aurea saecula*), apply the labels 'gold' and 'iron' predominantly to contrast the present (the age of Jupiter) with the past (often termed the reign of Saturn).¹⁸

When scholars schematize Roman authors according to their treatment of the 'Golden Age' trope, Ovid is classified as a trouble-maker.¹⁹ We find two passages repeatedly taken as touchstones for Ovid's ironizing approach to 'Golden Age' traditions, but these passages spin them in different directions. In *Amores* 3.8, the poet curses the power of money to seduce women (not an attitude he takes elsewhere in the collection), in an extended contrast between the Earth as it used to be and its treatment by men in the present (3.8.35–56). In *Ars amatoria* 3, the speaker ironically terms present-day Rome 'golden' for its spending power (3.112: *nunc aurea Roma est*), but here also bucks the trend of Roman moralizing by finding the present age more suited to him than the traditionally 'golden' past:

*Prisca iuvent alios: ego me nunc denique natum
gratulor: haec aetas moribus apta meis.*

Former times may appeal to others; I congratulate myself that I'm born now; this era suits my tastes. (*Ars amatoria* 3.121–2)

¹⁷ Gee (2013) 39–46 analyses Virgil's use of Hesiod, Plato and Aratus here. For Evans (2008) 18, inconsistencies of vision [in the *Eclogues*] are 'typical of the illogicalities . . . in utopian narratives'.

¹⁸ For a typical critical summary of this transformation of the myth in Rome, see Blundell (1986) 156–60. On the reign of Saturn (in which primitive people are civilized), see *Aeneid* 8.319–24. The Golden Age narrative is updated in the reigns of Tiberius and Nero; on the latter, see Gee (2013) ch. 5, and my ch. 6 below.

¹⁹ The thesis of Barker (1993) cautions against this 'caricature', along with those of Virgil-as-optimist and Horace-as-pessimist, in relation to the Imperial Golden Age narrative.

The verses occur within a digression on the history of female attire which finds *cultus* (here 'sophistication, grooming') to be a feature only of the present age, and this is the reason for the poet's preference.²⁰

Ovid's longest reworking of the races story, in *Metamorphoses* 1, offers other twists on poetic clichés of collective nostalgia and imperial praise. The obvious move that Ovid does *not* make in this poem, of asserting the return of the Golden Age in connection with an individual ruler,²¹ is an absence particularly striking in the wake of Virgil's *Eclogue* 4, whose language is so often recalled in Ovid's presentation.²² We may contrast the prominence of just this political connection in Germanicus' *Aratus* of c. 14 CE,²³ which overtly reframes both Aratus' opening praise of Zeus and subsequent account of the metallic generations as hymns of praise to a deified ruler who established peace.²⁴ For Aratus, the original presence of Justice on earth is 'another story' that men tell about the constellation of the Maiden; for Germanicus, her identification is in no doubt and her rule of the Golden Age is part of history, whose presentation is emphatically Roman and imperial in framing and detail.²⁵ Germanicus seals a suggested connection between the Maiden Astraea and Augustus when at *Aratus* 558–60 he presents Augustus' catasterism in terms strongly reminiscent of the Maiden's departure.²⁶ By contrast, as I shall argue, Ovid's account undermines the significance of Astraea's departure from earth, and, although presenting various images of a political cosmology in

²⁰ On these lines in their immediate context, see Watson (1982).

²¹ As e.g. Galinsky (1981) 197, Fabre-Serris (1995) 60 note.

²² For the reminiscences, see e.g. Bömer (1969) 48–56 on *Met.* 89–112.

²³ On the date, see Possanza (2004), with interesting remarks (*passim*) on the limits of 'translation' as a description of Germanicus' aims in response to Aratus.

²⁴ The invocation to the Maiden at vv. 98–102 is the first significant departure from Aratus since the prologue, which redirects Aratus' praise of Zeus to an unnamed 'father'.

²⁵ Besides references to *penatis* (109, 124) and to civil wars (*consanguineis fuerat discordia nota* 112–13), it seems significant that Germanicus' *Virgo* ruled single-handedly ('you taught the untrained mob'; *rude uulgi* ... *formabas* 110–11) rather than 'gathering the elders' (ἀγειρομένη ... γέροντας *Ph.* 105), which to Roman ears would recall the Republican Senate.

²⁶ Compare 'leaving behind the people thunderstruck and fearing worse than their present evils' (132: *attonitos linquens populos grauiora pauentis*) with 'in the midst of an awe-struck, quaking throng of foreigners and your own people' (559: *attonitas inter gentis patriamque pauentem*).

Metamorphoses 1 and 15, the text does not encourage a reader to connect these with Astraea's presence in heaven.

Bearing in mind that the account in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1 is the only extended multi-stage narrative of *metallic* races extant after Aratus which does not purport to translate Aratus,²⁷ we may well wonder what purposes are served by retelling the story in such detail in *Metamorphoses* 1. It may be worth comparing the larger aims of another post-Ovidian author, Avienus, whose rendition of Aratus (c. 360 CE)²⁸ is the only one to survive complete. As with Germanicus, Avienus' greatly expanded version of the Maiden's catasterism (at 79 lines, the longest extant rewriting of the metallic narrative after Hesiod) offers a touchstone for the way in which his poem's 'exuberant' polytheism and moralizing detail rival the accounts of his predecessors.²⁹ Having firmly reinstated Jupiter as a cosmic power by naming him six times in the first four verses of the poem,³⁰ Avienus elaborates on options for the Maiden's identity (*AvPh.* 277–90),³¹ turns her angry outburst into a diatribe (326–34),³² and with crimes of 'Bronze ages' (*aerea saecula*) recalling elements from Virgil and Ovid, takes the story into the present day (338–52). In an all-encompassing narrative, Avienus offers a rapid survey of the intellectual progress of humanity³³ and literary history,³⁴ as part of a project of describing the whole world.³⁵

In this wider aim and method, I would argue, Avienus is influenced by Ovid's own, supra-political goals.³⁶ This chapter will demonstrate afresh that coming to the *Metamorphoses* along Hesiodic tracks enables us to appreciate Ovid's parodies of the

²⁷ Ovid himself (when young?) translated Aratus. Two fragments are extant; cf. Courtney (2003) 308–9.

²⁸ On the date, see Gee (2013) 148.

²⁹ See Bellandi *et al.* (2001) 89–94 and Fiedler (2004) x–xvii.

³⁰ Cf. Soubiran (1981) 41–50. ³¹ Cf. first Gatz (1967) 68–70.

³² Lewis (1986) 215–32 finds this passage typical of Avienus' emphasis on *furor*.

³³ Soubiran (1981) 50.

³⁴ See e.g. Bellandi *et al.* (2001) 96 on Avienus' juxtaposing archaisms with neologisms to recall 'different traditions of six centuries of hexametric poetry'.

³⁵ This *Phaenomena* was accompanied in the manuscripts by a *Descriptio orbis terrae* and an *Ora maritima*. See Reeve (1983) 19 and Zehnacker (1989) 328.

³⁶ Gatz (1967) at 63, 67 and 69 asserts Ovidian influence on both Germanicus and Avienus.

'grammar of panegyric'³⁷ as just one part of a complex engagement with multiple different cultural traditions 'authorized' by Hesiod.

5.1b Hesiod in Ovid

Along with the wider fate of the races narrative at Rome, the scholarly arena most affected by reinvestigation into Ovid's use of the metallic myth is the sense of Hesiod's presence in the *Metamorphoses*. It has also long been observed that Ovid's epic, insofar as it presents a series of gods begetting children on mortal women, recalls the structuring topic of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, which outlines the major heroic genealogies of the Greeks.³⁸ Indeed, the *Metamorphoses* itself was once used to reconstruct the order of the surviving *Catalogue* fragments, before the focus for this exercise turned to the *Library* of the mythographer ps.Apollodorus.³⁹ Not all scholars are convinced of Ovid's direct knowledge of the *Catalogue*⁴⁰ – king lists have been proposed as his primary source for the *Metamorphoses*' chronological scheme.⁴¹ However, attention has recently been drawn to various analogies between the themes and poetics of Ovid's narrative and those of the Hesiodic *Catalogue*; over and above the fondness for catalogues, the use of metamorphosis as a motif has been observed in the *Catalogue*,⁴² along with unexpected juxtapositions of framing and content, developed in Hellenistic poetry,⁴³ and even 'Ovidian' sylleptic puns.⁴⁴

Building on such reminiscences of these Hesiodic works is the idea that the *Metamorphoses*' loose progression from tales of gods to tales of heroes offers a large-scale echo of Hesiod's *Theogony* plus *Catalogue* as a sequence within a broad history of the

³⁷ The phrase of Gee (2000) 152, referring to Virgil, Horace and Ovid's *Fasti*.

³⁸ See Ziogas (2013); also Cameron (2004) 273–6, Fletcher (2005), Barchiesi (2005) cviii–ix, cxxxiii–iv.

³⁹ Fletcher (2005) reviews these movements in the scholarship.

⁴⁰ Ziogas (2013) 3–19 explicitly argues for this, a point assumed by Hardie (2005) reviewing prior uses of the *Catalogue* in Latin poetry.

⁴¹ Cole (2008) posits Castor of Rhodes' *Chronica* behind Ovid's concern with mythical chronology.

⁴² Hirschberger (2008). ⁴³ Rutherford (2000) 91–3. ⁴⁴ Ziogas (2013) 16–17, 174–8.

universe.⁴⁵ Already Virgil in his sixth *Eclogue* (the 'song of Silenus') seems to have recast this Hesiodic material as a kind of 'universalizing' mythological history.⁴⁶ The influence of Hesiod's *Theogony* (combined with the Shield of Achilles in Homer *Iliad* 18) is immediately apparent in Ovid's initial account of the world's creation out of the state 'which they called chaos' (*Met.* 1.7: *quem dixere chaos* – so 'footnoting' the Hesiodic tradition) through the forceful separation of sky from earth (*caelo terras . . . abscidit* 1.22).⁴⁷ In more formal terms, the *Metamorphoses*' opening request to the gods to inspire a *perpetuum . . . carmen* ('continuous song') *ab origine mundi / ad mea . . . tempora* ('from the beginning of the world down to my own times', *Met.* 1.3–4) has been linked to the prologues of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Diodorus' universal histories.⁴⁸ Hesiodic intertexts may then work to mark Ovid's aspirations, beginning from (what was constructed to be) the beginning of the universalizing history tradition. Ovid seems, however, to flout expectations; although the *Metamorphoses*, like Hesiod's *Theogony*, begins with a cosmogony, Love is no longer a primal element (cf. *Th.* 120–2 – indeed, Ovid emphasizes war: *obstatatque aliis aliud*), the 'theogony' proper is lacking and the divine succession receives two lines (*Met.* 1.113–14 – see 5.3b below).⁴⁹

In this broad scheme, possibilities for ways in which Ovid's *Metamorphoses* responds to ideas in and of the *Works and Days* have not been systematically articulated and evaluated. Elsewhere in Ovid's output, there is ample evidence of his interest in the style of this, the iconic Hesiodic poem – the didactic *Ars amatoria*, with its parody of the 'Days',⁵⁰ and of course the *Fasti*, the days of the Roman calendar, programmatically introduced by Janus' exhortation to learn (*disce* 1.101).⁵¹ If we recall that the *Works*

⁴⁵ First in Ludwig (1965b), arguing that Ovid's poem extended the Hesiodic history to his own day.

⁴⁶ Rosati (2009) 361–2.

⁴⁷ In general on Ovid's joint debt to Hesiod and Homer in the proem, see Myers (1994). Wheeler (1995) discusses echoes of Hesiod's *Theogony* and Homer's Shield of Achilles in Ovid's creation myth as implying both spatial and temporal comprehensiveness.

⁴⁸ Wheeler (2002). ⁴⁹ Ziogas (2013) 59.

⁵⁰ See Hollis (1977) 104 on *Ars am.* 1.399–436.

⁵¹ On Janus as a speaker playing (and correcting) Hesiod, see first Barchiesi (1997b) 230–6.

and Days is the poem that engages urgently with the poet’s present, the ‘Hesiodic big three’⁵² taken together form a prototype for Ovid’s project in the *Metamorphoses*, insofar as they offer in combination a history of the universe extending to the poet’s own day (cf. Manilius 2.11–24, cited in 1.2c above). If we follow up the idea that loose ideas of Hesiod’s works ‘mark’ different stages of the *Metamorphoses*, the logical place to look for evocations of the *Works and Days* is the final (‘historical’) section of Ovid’s poem. The most plausible candidate here is the ‘hyper-didactic’⁵³ turn of Pythagoras’ 400-line speech opening Book 15. Discussion of this monologue has rightly concentrated on its parodies of Empedocles and Lucretius,⁵⁴ but these do not preclude evocations of their ultimate source, the *Works and Days*, as part of Ovid’s larger programme for his own poem.

A different version of the thesis that Hesiod provides Ovid with a model of universal history has, however, recently won scholarly notice; the idea that all three major Hesiodic poems are evoked in the *first* book of the *Metamorphoses*. It was always the case that the extent of the four-stage narrative of metallic races in *Metamorphoses* 1 reminded commentators of the *Works and Days* presentation. In the new frame of analysis, however, the races narrative is granted a symbolic value in the chronology of Ovid’s project; insofar as the sequence takes the story of human history into the reign of Jupiter, beyond the phase of primitive innocence, it provides the conceptual foundation of the *Catalogue*-era narratives which make up the bulk of the poem.⁵⁵ Most recently, a bolder version of the idea assumes through the races narrative an evocation of the entire *Works and Days* as a sequel to the *Theogony*, with subsequent allusions to the *Catalogue* as a further ‘supplement’, its ‘intermediate perspective between the divine and the human’ completing a ‘unified reading of the Hesiodic corpus’.⁵⁶

⁵² Hunter (2005) 241. ⁵³ Barchiesi (2001b) 64.

⁵⁴ Hardie (2009) ch. 4, and see the introduction to Book 15 in Hardie (in press).

⁵⁵ Rosati (2009) 363: ‘Ovid could draw from *Works and Days* the myth of ages which serves as an ideological premise to introduce a series of myths based on the conflict between men and gods.’

⁵⁶ Ziogas (2013) 111.

My argument will modify this thesis, nuancing the proposition that the narrative of metallic races should be part of a broader sense of Hesiod's role in this poem. Echoes of Hesiod indeed cluster in the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, a fact which (on the model of Virgil's *Georgics*) both suggests the antiquity of the Hesiodic corpus as a literary prototype for Ovid's own universalizing project and throws into relief the fate of this material in Ovid's hands. Combined as it is with echoes of intervening Greek and Roman narratives of human development, and read in dialogue with the stories around it, Ovid's sequence of races points to a more complex reuse of Hesiod's cosmos. Catullus 64, a poem proven to be a significant influence on the presentation of the *Metamorphoses*, offers a precedent for a more anarchic treatment of Hesiod's universe, since this epyllion, in recombining themes from the Hesiodic *Catalogue* and the *Works and Days*, both asserts and complicates the sense of a strong distinction between the world of the heroes and the present.⁵⁷

This chapter will suggest that in the wake of Catullus, Ovid uses the narrative of races, and through this, Hesiod's *Works and Days* and the Hesiodic corpus more broadly, to preview the core narrative games of the *Metamorphoses* in relation to mythological-historical chronology and that of the literary traditions into which the poem inserts itself.⁵⁸ As I hope has been made clear already in this book, the 'myth of the races', especially in the hands of Plato, Aratus and Virgil, had become a focus for experiments in configuring the human experience of time in relation to the possibility of cosmic repetition or circularity.⁵⁹ Within the *Metamorphoses*, it should be no surprise if Ovid uses Hesiod to 'authorize' not one but several alternative ideas of 'universalizing' poetry, or if he points up further twists on those ideas through the 'myth of the races' as a key strand of Hesiod's ancient reception. Insofar as the project of the *Metamorphoses* proposes a linear world history, Ovid's hexameter poem would be expected to draw inspiration from Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Catalogue* more than from the *Works and*

⁵⁷ See 1.3b above, with Pontani (2000) and Feeney (2007) 123–7.

⁵⁸ I shall argue in ch. 6 that the *Octavia* attributed to Seneca picks up the sense that retelling the races narrative brings associations with different literary voices.

⁵⁹ Cf. (independently) Gee (2013) chs. 1–2.

Days, whose expression of the yearly round is such a crucial model for Ovid’s didactically framed calendric poem, the *Fasti*. Yet it has been shown that the *Fasti* itself, beginning from Janus who declares he once was Chaos (*Fasti* 1.103), also draws extensively on the *Theogony*,⁶⁰ and so while we might think of these two Ovidian poems as a pair to rival the two signature works of Hesiod,⁶¹ a more accurate view will be that both recall both.

First outlining the material to be treated, I shall thereafter argue in three stages for a new understanding of Ovid’s ‘little Hesiod’ and its importance in the *Metamorphoses*. Considering first how the metallic story in Book 1 highlights the process of periodization and prepares for the *Metamorphoses*’ wider games with time (section 5.2), I then highlight its early warning of the poem’s propensity to offer alternative perspectives on events (5.3), and show how the four-stage sequence in *Metamorphoses* 1 incorporates allusions to other sections of Hesiod’s didactic poem such that it may be taken as ‘emblematic’ of this facet of the *Works and Days*. Finally, I shall suggest (5.4) that Hesiod is for Ovid both a ‘universalizing’ poet and one whose corpus exhibits a self-conscious interplay between its constituent poems. In showing that Ovid’s metallic myth prompts recognition of a network of allusions to all three Hesiodic poems in *Metamorphoses* 1, this chapter expands current ideas of what Ovid takes from the Hesiodic corpus in shaping the course of his narrative.

5.2 Periodization

5.2a Aratus versus Hesiod in Ovid’s ‘myth of the races’

Given that even three-stage accounts of humanity are relatively rare in extant Latin, the detailed sequence of gold, silver, bronze and iron in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.89–150 is particularly striking. The Golden men are described as spontaneously righteous, without the need to explore the world or to wage war, and content with food produced naturally by the earth. An ‘eternal spring’ reigns, in which rivers and trees flow with nectar. Seasons are created only in

⁶⁰ Barchiesi (1997) 233 and Labate (2005) 178. ⁶¹ Feeney (1999) 26.

conjunction with the Silver race, which accordingly develops shelter and agriculture. A brief note of the more violent Bronze race paves the way for an extended description of the Iron race's crimes, described as a total influx of the evils avoided by the Golden race. No communal property is left, and the spirit of greedy exploration now extends underground, and even destroys the family unit, until all the gods have abandoned the earth.

On the face of it, the complexity of this story, lacking only the Heroes, invites immediate comparison with Hesiod's *five* races, yet scholars emphasizing the prevalence of the two-stage version in Rome have downplayed in Ovid's account the intervening transformations of the climate, human lifestyle and human character which are allocated to the eras of Silver and Bronze men.⁶² Where intervening stages *are* acknowledged, Aratus, rather than Hesiod, is considered Ovid's primary reference point, as the first exponent of a three-part version of the story.⁶³ The most detailed descriptions of the Ovidian text, however, highlight the ways in which it teases readers with evocations of *multiple* prior structures for human history,⁶⁴ and with regard to Aratus and Hesiod in particular, there is more to be said.

Central to this discussion is Ovid's description of the Bronze race, certainly the most striking indication of the fact that his narrative in the *Metamorphoses*, although presenting four metallic stages in the order that they appear in Hesiod, does not translate the proportions of Hesiod's account. In Hesiod, the descriptions of Golden and Silver races take respectively seventeen⁶⁵ and sixteen lines, the Bronze race thirteen lines and the Heroic Age seventeen – that is, the first four stages receive roughly equal amounts of narrative, before the Iron Age is detailed in twenty-eight lines

⁶² E.g. Lovejoy and Boas (1935) 49 declare that 'the races between the Golden Age and our own [*sic*] are relegated to the background, and the tendency towards a single contrast, between the Age of Saturn and the Age of Zeus [*sic*] is reënforced [*sic*]'.

⁶³ Gatz (1967) 76 asserts the weakening of the Hesiodic 'Kraftfeld'. Cf. Rhorer (1980) 302: 'a tripartite structure has overwhelmed the quadripartite myth'. However, the sequence 'gold, silver, iron' is not that of Aratus, and a 'quadripartite myth' is not explicit in Greek or Latin before Ovid, although it is posited as a Near-Eastern source for Hesiod, and may be reflected in the Book of Daniel.

⁶⁴ See e.g. Landolfi (1996) 63–91 for emphasis on non-Aranean sources for Ovid's account.

⁶⁵ West (1978) brackets *WD* 124–5, which duplicates 254–5.

(six of them on the present time). Ovid, by contrast, presents a more chiasmic structure; he spends twenty-four verses on the Golden Age (*aurea aetas*) but twelve on the Silver brood (*argentea proles*) and only two and a half on their Bronze successors (*aenea proles*) before launching into a twenty-three-and-a-half-line description of the age of Iron. In this presentation, the Bronze stage indeed appears transitional, looking back through comparative adjectives (‘of sterner disposition and more ready to rush to cruel arms’ – *saeuior ingeniis et ad horrida promptior arma* 1.126) and forward to the worst phase (‘but *not yet* impious’ – *non scelerata tamen* 127).

The remarkable brevity of this description, however, simultaneously draws attention to the fact that this stage might, like the Heroes, have been omitted from the sequence altogether; its retention is important. With Aratus’ three-stage account in view, it is worth observing that the reader of Ovid’s account has in fact been primed to expect a Bronze era, for the narrator has made ‘bronze’ or ‘brass’ a reference point throughout the foregoing narrative. Already, in dwelling on the absence of law in the Golden Age, he elaborates: ‘no threatening words were to be read on brazen tablets’ (*uerba minantia fixo / aere legebantur*⁶⁶ 1.91–2). Bronze next appears metonymically for warfare, absent from this first era: ‘there were no trumpets of straight, no horns of curving brass, / no helmets, no swords’ (*non tuba drecti, non aeris cornua flexi, non galeae, non ensis* 1.98–9).⁶⁷ Further foreshadowing of the third metallic stage comes in the introduction of the Silver race as ‘inferior to gold, but of more value than yellow brass’ (*auro deterior, fuluo pretiosior aere* 1.115 – perhaps alluding to their relative places in the hierarchy of Imperial coins, reorganized by Augustus into a tri-metallic scheme).⁶⁸ Since the narrator has not yet referred to Iron, the reader is prepared for Bronze to be the

⁶⁶ For this reading, see Barchiesi (2005) 169.

⁶⁷ Ovid imports, via Aratus, Hesiod’s statement that the Bronze men constructed weapons (χάλκεα τεύχεα *WD* 150, οἱ πρῶτοι ... ἐχαλκεύσαντο μάχαιραν *Ph.* 131); cf. the less specific *WD* 113.

⁶⁸ Barchiesi (2005) on *Met.* 1.115: an *aureus* = 25 (silver) *denarii*, each of which = 16 (bronze) *asses*.

worst stage, involving 'wars and hostile bloodshed', as Aratus' Maiden warned (cf. *Ph.* 125).⁶⁹

The Ovidian summary of the third race as 'not yet impious' (127) therefore comes as a surprise, suddenly recasting this era as a mere delay of the climax, introduced in the same line (127): 'the last [race] is of hard iron' (*de duro est ultima ferro*). Truncated thus, Ovid's description of the Bronze race, positioned before an extended account of the intensification of wickedness 'in the age of (still) baser vein' (*uenae peioris in aeuum* 128), is itself reminiscent of Aratus' Silver generation, scornfully apostrophized by the Maiden as intermediate in wickedness (*Ph.* 123–6), or even Hesiod's six-line image of the present race of Iron, suffering 'but still' (ὅλλ' ἔμπης *WD* 179) not entirely without good, unlike the worse phase to come.

When read against the Hesiodic account, let alone that of Aratus, Ovid's 'final' phase seems polemically abrupt in its opening, lacking omens or warnings of the end. 'Straightaway all evil burst forth . . . modesty, truth and faith fled' (*protinus inrupit . . . / omne nefas: fugere pudor uerumque fidesque* 1.127–8). The flight of *pudor* with two companions surpasses the Hesiodic denouement (the flight of Αἰδώς and Νέμεσις *WD* 197–200). Yet Ovid's narrative continues, detailing the advent of sailing, of partitioning the land and the discovery of 'wealth' (*opes*) in the bowels of the earth (*Met.* 1.138–40). The presentation obscures the exact point(s) in time at which iron and gold were discovered and exploited, but the detail introduced at this point in the narration paradoxically inverts the metallic value-system which moved down the scale from the innocent and peaceful Golden Age: *iamque nocens ferrum ferroque nocentius aurum / prodierati; prodit bellum, quod pugnat utroque* (141–2: 'by now'⁷⁰ destructive iron had come forth, and gold more destructive than iron;

⁶⁹ The Maiden's warning to the Silver men of 'worse offspring' (κακώτερα τέκνα *Ph.* 1.124) is also Ovid's inspiration for the anticipatory comparative *pretiosior aere* (115), as Landolfi (1996) 67 notes.

⁷⁰ What is the force of *iamque* here? The word opens Books 3, 7, 8 and 14, as well as Ovid's seal on the poem (15.871, with a perfect tense); at that point it seems a closural signal, yet Hardie (in press) notes on this line that it begins the acrostic INCIP-, so indicates the moving target of each new reader's 'now'.

war came, which fights with both'). Bronze is not part of the violent climax, despite the anticipatory association between bronze and warfare in the description of the Golden Age. Ovid's description of the Iron period intensifies by dwelling on intra-familial strife, which marked the worst phase of Hesiod's Iron Age (*WD* 182–8), but each detail now appears with a Roman spin.⁷¹ Only after all this comes the start of the conclusion, the flight of Astraea, glossed in Virgilian style as 'last of the immortals' (*ultima caelestium* 1.150; cf. *Geo.* 2.473–4 of Justice: *extrema per illos / Iustitia excedens terris uestigia fecit*).⁷²

Starting as rival reference points in Ovid's account, Hesiod and Aratus emerge as pawns in his game of manipulating readers' mythological-historical reference points and expectations about their own relation to the story. For the Iron stage, which promises closure with its initial label (*ultima*), present tense (*est* 127) and climactic vocabulary (*omne nefas* 128), turns out not to be the 'last' race to appear on earth. Ovid juxtaposes with the departure of Astraea (149–50) an abbreviated description of the defeat of the hubristic Giants strongly reminiscent of Hesiod's *Theogony*; the Giants' blood, animated by Earth and turned into human form (*in faciem uertisse hominum* 160), yielded a new race, again 'contemptuous of the gods' (*et illa propago / contemptrix superum ... / ... fuit* 160–2).⁷³ This prompts Jupiter to summon a council of the gods and announce the Flood. Thus, whether or not this new race should be counted as human, at least one more creation and destruction of mortal stock precedes the creation of our own 'hard race' (*genus durum* 414) after the Flood, from the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha (1.381–415).

⁷¹ E.g. the prosaic *cautus ... mensor* (1.136) recalls the cult of Terminus (Barchiesi (2005) on *Met.* 1.135–6), and in 1.145, the addition of *socer* and *gener* to the Hesiodic list of broken relationships recalls Caesar and Pompey, so described in Catullus 29.24 and Virgil *Aen.* 6.831 (see further Bömer (1969) on *Met.* 1.145, Barchiesi (2005) on *Met.* 1.144–8). Syntactically and semantically, stepmothers (*terribiles nouercae* 147), the Roman stereotype of evil, replace Envy from Hesiod's account.

⁷² Compare Landolfi (1996) 77 on how Ovid's Golden Age details in succession the diets of the Hesiodic and Aratean Golden Ages, both connected and separated by *mox* at v. 109.

⁷³ On Ovidian play with contemporary political resonances of the Gigantomachy (as an attack on Jupiter/Augustus), see Fabre-Serris (1995) 55–62.

5.2b Expanding 'Hesiodic' strategies

My reason for emphasizing such misdirection as an Ovidian narrative strategy is the potential for analogy between the style of Ovid's races narrative and his poetic project as a whole. Ovid's manipulation of the reading experience is not confined to his presentation of the races; both in scope and in structure, this passage in *Metamorphoses* I anticipates the body of the poem⁷⁴ and ways in which its narrator disrupts his readers' sense of place. I shall argue that memories of Hesiod's races and the Hesiodic corpus more broadly aid this parallel.

This is a paradoxical idea, since this phenomenon is found in the poem first in relation to Hesiod's *Theogony*, as Ovid begins from Chaos (*Met.* 1.7) but then omits Love from the cosmogony. Indeed, sexual reproduction is an obvious absence in the story of humankind's regeneration from Deucalion and Pyrrha after the flood,⁷⁵ and Love does not become a real force in the poem until the following story (1.452–567) of Apollo's *primus amor*, for Daphne. Other expectations are defeated, as I have noted, when the Ovidian narrator, whose declared aim is to give an account *ad mea tempora* (*Met.* 1.4), launches into a 'Hesiodic' narrative of races, which was the first extant account of humankind that extends into the speaker's own time (*WD* 174–6). The temporal structure of the *Metamorphoses* version encourages readers to identify with the race of Iron – 'closural' perfect tenses describe the Silver and Bronze races, and again, from 128–40, the crimes of the Iron Age, before vivid present tenses dominate from v. 140 onwards, tackling the subjects of greed, war and intrafamilial strife.⁷⁶ Equally, the flight of Astraea, 'last of the heavenly ones', should mean that divine-human interaction is over and the Heroic Age is at an end; in fact, of course, divine rapes fill the opening five books of the poem, and the narration of core 'heroic' events, such as the Trojan War and its aftermath, extends until the wanderings of Aeneas end in

⁷⁴ Töchterle (1985) 12–14 makes the basic point about the significance of its temporal scope and theme.

⁷⁵ Cf. Ahl (1985) 107.

⁷⁶ So Töchterle (1985) 11–12, noting that many traits of the Iron age suggest a lament for the present. Landolfi (1996) 84 more cautiously describes the tenses as 'extradiegetic' allusions (unlike Hesiod's personal tone) to the coeval presence of the Iron race on earth.

Book 14.⁷⁷ With this in view, the metallic story may be counted among Ovid's teasing suggestions in Book 1 that there is not much more to tell to reach his own times.⁷⁸

Perhaps because this narrative, unlike that of Hesiod, does *not* end in the present time, insufficient attention has been paid to the possibility that other 'Hesiodic' aspects of Ovid's version foreshadow the poet's wider procedure in the *Metamorphoses*. There have been a few attempts to map the qualities of Hesiod's metallic races literally or symbolically onto the successive creations or presentations of humanity in *Metamorphoses* 1–2;⁷⁹ elaborate parallels soon seem tendentious,⁸⁰ but these analyses are refreshingly ready to allow detailed aspects of Ovid's 'myth of the races' to open up broader currents of thought in Ovid's poem, such as an implicit contest with Virgil regarding the role of a king or *princeps* in a primeval harmony.⁸¹

The impact of 'Hesiodic' memories triggered by features of Ovid's races narrative on the wider *Metamorphoses* is perhaps better considered in the more abstract terms of narrative strategies. I shall pick out three. It is worth noting, first, that a core ambiguity about the degree of continuity between the different stages of the sequence in Hesiod⁸² appears also in Ovid's account. Ovid's sequence of metallic races presents a continuous development: three of the stages are categorized as 'offspring' (*proles* 114, 125 and implicitly 127; see below) and the central two 'succeed' their predecessor (*subiit* in 114, of the Silver race, and *successit* in 125, of the Bronze race). This suggestion of connected progression is

⁷⁷ See Evans (2008) 41.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hardie (1993) 60–1: 'the act of creation represents the stability which is the epic's goal, and which in this epic seems to have been reached when we are scarcely under way'.

⁷⁹ Rhorer (1980) uses Vernant's analysis of Hesiod's races and Dumézil's tripartite classification of social functions (king/priest, warrior and agriculturalist), arguing that these are reflected in the successive creations of humanity in *Met.* 1 (at 76–86, 156–62, 398–415). Cf. Evans (2008) 44–9.

⁸⁰ As Rhorer (1980) herself admits, 304 n. 43.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 304–6 (e.g. Jupiter's kingly status is emphasized but he is treated as a [Dumézilian] 'second-function figure' [i.e. warlike]); see also Fabre-Serris (1995) 52–3. For Kubusich (1986) 252–3, if the four ages are the background to the story of the *Metamorphoses*, the equation between Augustus and Jupiter in 15.852–60 is to be seen as a sharp attack on Augustus.

⁸² Currie (2012) 38–44 notes that Hesiod's discontinuous sequence presents the paradox of ethical evolution without genetic or genealogical evolution.

intensified not only by the comparative adjectives introducing each stage, but also by the language of temporal development within the description of each race: *mox etiam* (109)⁸³ and *iam ... iam* (111) of miraculous fertility in the Golden Age;⁸⁴ *tum primum* at 119, 121 and 123 for the Silver race; *tertia* (125) and *non ... tamen* (127) of the Bronze race; *iamque ... / proderat; prodit* (141–2) within the Iron Age. Such assertions of linear succession are, however, a tease; the balance and arrangement of further details concerning physical and moral environments of each stage (except the Bronze race) tends to compartmentalize their 'worlds', to an extent not matched since Hesiod's (numerically sequential) discontinuous account. The effect of scale on the perception of continuity is, of course, a core critical question for the *Metamorphoses*, encapsulated by the paradox advertised by its proem, of a *perpetuum carmen* (4) which is also *deductum*;⁸⁵ frequently, a story initially presented in a sequence of other stories is so far developed that the reader loses sight of its original motivating framework.

Again, insofar as each 'generation' within Ovid's narrative of races seems independent of the others, we may speak about a multiplication of beginnings in this sequence, which well chimes in, not only with a longer sequence of human creations in the *Metamorphoses* which extends into the second half of the poem,⁸⁶ but also more broadly with the narrative dynamic of the poem, which delights in repetition of all kinds.⁸⁷ In Ovid's hands, Hesiod's sequence of races becomes the seed of a narrative logic of repetition as evolution.⁸⁸ Moreover, in the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, repetition of beginnings perhaps gives Ovid's epic the archaic feel of e.g. Hesiod's *Theogony* or the Hesiodic

⁸³ On this 'partitioning' of the Golden Age, see Kubusch (1986) 227, 231, 235 and Landolfi (1996) 76–7.

⁸⁴ Labate (2010) 147 notes that Ovid has an illustrious precedent for this in Virgil *Ecl.* 4.28: 'gradually (*paulatim*) the field grew yellow with wheat'.

⁸⁵ Cf. Knox (1986) 9–10. ⁸⁶ Fabre-Serris (2003) finds no fewer than eight.

⁸⁷ On this, cf. Wheeler (2000) 4: e.g. a cumulative series of rapes is as much part of the message as any single instance. He asks (12): 'what does it mean to have multiple beginnings?' The 'encyclopedic' subsuming of different traditions forms part of his answer (47).

⁸⁸ Cf. Barchiesi (2005) 166–7, who contrasts the 'catena di esperimenti divini' in Hesiod with the 'processo evolutivo' suggested in Ovid's version.

Catalogue, which track family trees to their youngest offspring and return to the start of the next.⁸⁹ Such repetition has different effects at the other end of Ovid's poem. In *Metamorphoses* 15, we find a magnification of the 'endgames' sensed already in reading Ovid's races narrative with Hesiod's account in mind; Ovid's version anticipates the wider problem of how to end a universal history whose conclusion is endlessly deferred in the reader's 'present'.⁹⁰

A third characteristic of Ovid's presentation of the races which we may find 'Hesiodic' (rather than 'Aratean') in spirit and which is evident also in the *Metamorphoses* as a whole is the limited extent of teleology in its design. Although the three-line introduction to Hesiod's sequence of five races may be understood as aetiological ('I'll tell you how from the same source there have come into being both gods and mortal human beings', with the emphasis on the differentiated result), Hesiod's main sequence presents one race after another, in a clear sense of progression, yet its true end (future doom for all the Iron race) is not anticipated until we come very close to it. Indeed, the shifting style of Hesiod's account suggests that the time of the speaker is the climax (*WD* 174) but then presents 180–201 as a grim coda. I have suggested, too, that Ovid misleads readers with the memory of Aratus insofar as he sets up and then undercuts the expectation that the Bronze race will be the climax. There is no explicit or reliable prediction of the 'last' (Iron) race from any prior point in the narrative, and the Iron race turns out not to be *the* conclusion, as Ovid moves from the *ultima* [race] of Iron to the race of the Giants. By contrast, Aratus' version of the races contains the Maiden's prophecy of humanity's future crime and suffering (partly realized by the Bronze race) and his translator Germanicus, although in many details influenced by Ovid, intensifies Aratus' teleological thrust by opening with an address to the Maiden constellation, which laments her hatred of mortals (*Aratus* 100: *exosa heu mortale genus*) and so

⁸⁹ See Most (2006) xxvi–lvi on the structure of these poems, and compare Virgil's repetition at the start of the *Aeneid* as imitating Homeric style. This suggestion was made to me by Philip Hardie.

⁹⁰ On the acknowledgement of this issue in 'universal histories', see Feeney (2007) 65–6. On the 'excess of concluding gestures' in *Metamorphoses* 15 and their effects, see Barchiesi (1997a).

anticipates the story's outcome: her disgusted departure from among mankind into the sky. We could say that Germanicus adopts a 'Virgilian' attitude to narration.⁹¹

Ovid's teleological game in the presentation of the races finds analogy in the sequence of stories in the *Metamorphoses* as a whole, in which explicit forward references to the time of Augustus strikingly fade after the opening books, although periodic allusions to Roman history and institutions continue to appear.⁹² As in Hesiod, where the death of one metallic race is the occasion for the creation of the next, so in the *Metamorphoses*, reaching the end of one story is the occasion for beginning the next; it 'habitually defers closure'.⁹³ While the prophecy-filled *Aeneid* introduces early on the prospect of *imperium sine fine* (*Aen.* 1.276), anticipations of cosmic stability early on in the *Metamorphoses* turn out to be a tease. Authoritative voices at the ends of *Aeneid* 6 and 8 overtly present Augustus as the goal of history, but no narrator in the *Metamorphoses* celebrates or anticipates a return to the Golden Age focused on Augustus. Again, although the Palatine does appear as an ironic analogy to Jupiter's Olympus in Book 1 (175–6), the poem does not anticipate any narrative about Augustus as if he were the focus of Ovid's 'own times'.⁹⁴ Indeed, the 'Augustan' ending of the *Metamorphoses* has been described as a mere supplement to the story in Book 15 of Asclepius' journey to Rome.⁹⁵

Concluding my consideration of how 'Hesiodic' narrative strategies in the races may work in *Met.* 1 to set the tone for Ovid's poem, I wonder if *divergent* possibilities for 'Hesiodic' chronologies are recalled by one key difference from Hesiod in Ovid's version of the races; the omission of the Heroes from the sequence.

⁹¹ Cf. *Eclogue* 4, focused on *Virgo's* return, with Franchet d'Espèrey (1997) on how, following Aratus, most versions of the races narrative are oriented around the Maiden's departure or return.

⁹² Feeney (1999) 27; by contrast, Gildenhard and Zissos (2004) emphasize Ovid's literary strategy of 'displacing Athens' with an eye to Rome, especially in Books 2 and 8.

⁹³ See further Wheeler (2000) 107–10.

⁹⁴ Cole (2008) 70–6 notes the contrast with the *Aeneid*; he posits that Ovid was following Varro instead.

⁹⁵ So Barchiesi (1997a) 193. In fact, as Evans (2008) 70 notes, its finale anticipates further *saecula*.

Ovid may derive this from Jewish sources,⁹⁶ but the vast majority of post-Hesiodic treatments of the story do omit the Heroic race, apparently to simplify its moralizing thrust (see especially Aratus, [ch. 4](#)). Those which *do* treat the Heroic Age in detail – particularly Catullus 64 and Virgil *Eclogue* 4 – offer chronologies that are, famously, internally contradictory (see [ch. 1](#), pp. 36–7). However, it has been suggested that Ovid omitted the Heroes because they would interrupt the chronological programme of the *Metamorphoses* towards historical time.⁹⁷ While stories of the traditional heroes do follow the story of the Heroic race at some distance, and make up two-thirds of the *Metamorphoses*, the notorious 'reticence' of heroes in the *Metamorphoses*⁹⁸ makes me doubtful that readers grant them any cohesion as a 'period' in the poem. Indeed, although everyone sees that this universal history loosely progresses through two mythological eras, of gods and Heroes, then historical time, there is no consensus about subdivisions of periods and few can keep track of chronology through the central books of the poem.⁹⁹ The challenges begin already in 1.5 (*ante* is the first word after the proem's announcement of a song that follows a temporal sequence). The sense of linear progress notoriously breaks down in Book 2, which opens with the ordered display of the Seasons on the doors of the Sun, but, following Phaethon's wild flight through the heavens, presents time fragmented, reversed in the narrative of Jupiter's rape of Lycaon's daughter Callisto (as if she had survived the flood narrated in Book 1), and fast-forwarded (to Book 15) in the presentation of Ocyrhoe's prophecy of Aesculapius.¹⁰⁰

Ovid's narrative of races and its aftermath signals the difficulties coming up in the *Metamorphoses* by shifts of viewpoint and location. Ovid omits the Heroes from his sequence, but 'compensates'

⁹⁶ Since Ovid's account of the Flood recalls that of Genesis; see Speyer (1986), with West (2003) on its connection to Lycaon.

⁹⁷ Gatz (1967) 71.

⁹⁸ See Nagle (1988) on the heroes as 'the frame, the pattern, the subject, or the audience for stories by, and often about, other characters'.

⁹⁹ See Feeney (1999) 18–24. Cole (2008) is one of the exceptions.

¹⁰⁰ On this example of games with time in the *Metamorphoses*, see Zissos and Gildenhard (1999).

for the omission¹⁰¹ by narrating the main exploit of the race of Giants, their offspring, and Jupiter's visit to Lycaon. It is markedly difficult to follow Ovid's juxtaposition of the Iron race with his abbreviated description of hubristic Giants whose blood, animated by Earth, yields a new humanoid race: 'that offspring also contemptuous of the gods' (*Met.* 1.160–2). At this point, Jupiter's recollection of the recent impiety shown him by Lycaon (164–5, 209–43), whose punishment he narrates to the gods *after* alluding to the destruction of the Giants (182–6), compounds readers' confusion as to when/whether the (apparently contemporaneous) Iron race is destroyed.¹⁰² If the story of Lycaon's inhospitality to the disguised Jupiter had immediately followed the metallic myth, it would have been a straightforward demonstration of the fact that in the Iron Age, 'guest was not safe from host' (144). As it is, the shift into Jupiter's perspective clouds the precise degeneration represented by Lycaon.

Both in the presentation of this story, and in separating Callisto from Lycaon by the Flood but specifying their genealogical connection (perhaps fusing divergent 'Hesiodic' traditions),¹⁰³ Ovid collapses the distinction between the world of divine-mortal interaction and our own, post-diluvian world.¹⁰⁴ A similar obfuscation is effected through Catullus' use of critical perspectives on the heroes in Poem 64, the only extant text other than the Hesiodic *Catalogue* to refer to theoxeny (divine visits to mortals) as the main feature of the Heroic Age.¹⁰⁵ It may be telling that Ovid's account of the Iron Age reworks details of Catullus' 'Hesiodic' epilogue,¹⁰⁶ and recalls its logic, in which our own crimes, driving out 'justice', result in our being abandoned by the just mind of the gods (Catullus 64.398 *iustitiam* ... *omnes fugarunt* ... 406 *iustificam*

¹⁰¹ Fabre-Serris (1995) 59.

¹⁰² Fabre-Serris (2003) 134–5 assumes two human races coexist until the Flood destroys both. McKim (1980) 103 compares the hubris of the Giants and the Iron men trying to confuse ordained divisions.

¹⁰³ Ancient testimonia differ as to whether or not Hesiod made Callisto the daughter of Lycaon; Sale (1962) suggests that these sources refer respectively to the Hesiodic *Astronomy* and *Catalogue*. Ziogas (2013) 74 finds analogies in the divergent treatments of Callisto in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*.

¹⁰⁴ Conversely, as the 'hard' descendants of Deucalion, we are 'siblings' of the *Catalogue*'s heroes.

¹⁰⁵ Pontani (2000) 275.

¹⁰⁶ On its 'Romanization' see Barchiesi (2005) on *Met.* 1.125–50.

nobis mentem auertere deorum);¹⁰⁷ analogously, Ovid narrates the flight of personified virtues at the *start* of the Iron Age (*fugere pudor uerumque fidesque Met.* 1.129), and the departure of Astraea at the end (150).

It is worth noting, too, that the story of Philemon and Baucis, narrated at the centre of the poem (*Metamorphoses* 8.618–724), offers a replay of the Lycaon story in a more positive key. These pious peasants who entertain Jupiter and Mercury escape the flood with which their impious peers are punished, and see their humble home transformed into a marble temple. The story fuses elements of the theoxeny characteristic of the Heroic Age with the divine punishments characteristic of the Iron Age and the miraculous, eternal prosperity that is a hallmark of the Golden Age.¹⁰⁸ Such a ‘replay’ of themes to a different end, a feature so characteristic of Ovid’s poem, is ‘Hesiodic’ in connection with the races. We may recall the tradition (especially in Plato and in Virgil) of rewriting Hesiod’s races with an eye to their context in the *Works and Days*, in which images of Just and Unjust cities (*WD* 225–47) apply aspects of the Golden, Heroic and Iron races to the world in which Hesiod’s audiences live (see [ch. 2](#)), before Hesiod warns the kings that Zeus beholds their behaviour (*WD* 249ff).

It can now be seen that to debate whether or not Ovid’s account is ‘really’ a three-stage one is to miss his point: Ovid’s narrative highlights the artificiality of all traditional periodizations. The metallic sequence in Book 1 presents the first overtly schematic presentation in the *Metamorphoses*, bridging the cosmological frame and the body of the poem,¹⁰⁹ yet Ovid’s self-consciously messy repackaging of the tradition of races has been overlooked in studies of the poem’s wider concern to ‘demonstrate the inadequacy of schemes and structures for making sense of the world’.¹¹⁰ To this end, the Bronze stage, so overtly transitional, vividly

¹⁰⁷ Franchet d’Espèrey (1997) 178 notes that this question of responsibility is posed by Aratus’ narrative – is the loss of Justice cause or punishment for the degeneration of her mortal companions?

¹⁰⁸ Gildenhard and Zissos (2004) 67–8 emphasize the story’s importance for the poem as a whole.

¹⁰⁹ In general on the difficulty of distinguishing these, cf. Barchiesi (2002) 196, Solodow (1988) 11.

¹¹⁰ Solodow (1988) 34. See also Myers (1994) 20–1 and Tissol (1997) 170, 193, 215.

proclaims the narrator's freedom to compress or pass over stretches of time in recounting events.¹¹¹ In terminating the description of the third race and introducing the 'final' one within a single line, Ovid caricatures the idea that one could identify the precise moment of change. He thereby undermines the mythical partitioning of history as effectively as does Lucretius, whose account of civilization eschewed any but literal metallic terms.

My final goal for this section is to show how the process of periodization is variously highlighted and unseated by the use of metallic terms in human histories at *both* ends of the *Metamorphoses*, and the implications of this for reading 'histories' in the intervening books.

5.2c *Eras-ing the races: Ovid and Pythagoras*

Ovid implicitly develops a core critical question about how literally we are to understand metallic labels, a question provoked originally by Hesiod's sudden emphasis on the fact that the 'Bronze' men (*WD* 144) actually used bronze for their weapons, houses and tools (150–1). Hesiod's famous anaphoric expression, recalled by Lucretius (*DRN* 5.1289), suggests a basis for the label different from that of the 'Gold' and 'Silver' men, and many scholars have concluded that these earliest two labels are to be taken literally (cf. ch. 2 above, n. 135). When Hesiod speaks of 'Iron' men, however, the label seems to be entirely allegorical. Ovid engages with this range of possibilities most obviously in the pun which introduces the men of iron: 'straightaway all evil burst into this age of baser vein' (*uenae peioris Met.* 1.128). The ambiguity of the term 'vein', between human and mineral, not only 'revitalizes the stereotype' of the metallic label, but anticipates the more literal creations of humans out of minerals, which begin with the 'hard race' (*genus durum* 414) from the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha.¹¹² In its immediate context, of course, Ovid proceeds to imitate Hesiod's glossing of the 'Bronze' label (in reference to its literal presence), characterizing the 'Iron' era by the discovery of

¹¹¹ On this aspect of the 'narrativization' of real events, cf. White (1980).

¹¹² So Barchiesi (2005) on *Met.* 1.128.

wealth in the earth, glossed as the use of iron and ‘more harmful’ gold (138–41).

A pun on human and metallic qualities has been detected also in the intriguing adjective, unique in the *Metamorphoses*, with which Ovid labels the third race. Its description as *aenean* (‘brazen’) is a provocative switch from all the premonitions of *aer* in the preceding account (see 5.2a above). Especially if we think that Ovid has in view Catullus’ play with the boundaries between the Heroic Age and the present, we may here agree with Ahl, who finds here a reference to the hero AENEAS, founder of the house of Caesar and the Roman race; he therefore argues that Ovid’s AENEAn age is the era of civil war (cf. 1.145), identical both with the ‘age of heroes’ and with the contemporary-sounding ‘iron’ age.¹¹³ The appeal of this idea is that Ovid’s term, understood thus, follows up Catullus’ gloss on Hesiod, insofar as it implies that, from the viewpoint of a Roman poet, a distinction between Heroic, Bronze and Iron eras is redundant. Now, the composite adjective suggests, the speed of degeneration is too fast to keep track of the ages, despite their distinct labels.¹¹⁴

These are focused examples of a larger equivocation in Ovid’s account between a sequence of races and the notion (exploited by Augustus) of ‘ages’. There is the famous oddity (on which see further below, p. 238) of Ovid’s introductory combination of *aetas* with the verb ‘is sown’ (*aurea ... sata est aetas* 89)¹¹⁵ before the sequence settles into language more reminiscent of Aratus’ conception of the races as successive generations; the Silver and Bronze are *proles* (‘offspring’ or ‘generation’ 114, 125). Ovid then introduces ‘the last one, of iron’ implicitly as *proles* (by agreement with the feminine nominative adjective in *de duro est ultima ferro* 127) but immediately terms it an ‘age’ – ‘straightaway all evil burst into this age of baser vein’ (*aeuum* 128). In the wake of the celebration of the birth of a boy

¹¹³ Ahl (1985) 74–5. He finds support for a political reading here in the use of *aurea* in *Met.* 15 as an adjective for Venus beholding the civil wars: ‘*quod ut AVREA uidit / AENEAE genitrix* (15.761–2)’.

¹¹⁴ Compare my reading (ch. 3 above) of echoes of Hesiod’s Iron race in the final three stages of Plato’s account of faulty constitutions (*Republic* 8.560d–79d).

¹¹⁵ A parallel use of *aetas* with *polluit* appears in Pythagoras’ account at 15. 96–8; Baldry (1952) 90 concludes that *aetas* must here mean ‘race’.

in Virgil's *Eclogue* 4, this equivocation presents a question for Ovid's readers, perhaps including the emperor: *can* a human birth define an 'age'?

Rather than putting himself into the ongoing sequence, in the manner of Hesiod and Virgil, Ovid relegates this most Roman-looking era to the remote past.¹¹⁶ The label 'iron' takes on the distancing quality conveyed in Greek epic by the famously rare adjective for the heroic generation found in Hesiod's narrative of races: ἡμίθεοι, the 'semi-divine' heroes (*WD* 160). As Ovid helps us to see, such distancing is in fact presupposed by *any* act of naming prior generations. Metallic labels mark the very act of mythologizing. It is perhaps significant that Ovid's description of the 'Golden' age focuses on its spontaneous rectitude, security and absence of seasonal change;¹¹⁷ these details suggest the constancy of gold, but further betray that this label was bestowed in retrospect, by those recognizing how different (*insecure*, *changeable*) was the age in which they live(d).

The point that the 'Golden Age' receives its name *post euentum* seems to have been made by the fourth-century philosopher Dicaearchus, whom Porphyry records as discussing the men of old:

τὸν ἄριστον ἐζηκότας βίον, ὡς χρυσοῦν γένος νομίζεσθαι παραβαλλομένους πρὸς τοὺς νῦν, κιβδηλοῦ καὶ φαυλοτάτης ὑπάρχοντας ὕλης.

[they] led the best life, so that they are regarded as a golden race, when compared with those of the present day, who consist of an adulterated and most vile matter. (*De abstinentia* 4.2 in fr. 49 Wehrli, trans. Saunders)¹¹⁸

In Latin, the point is found in *Aeneid* 8: Evander states that Saturn's reign was so peaceful that mortals (now) testify to it as a Golden Age: *aurea quae perhibent illo sub rege fuere / saecula: sic placida populos in pace regebat* (324–5). Long before this, however, the

¹¹⁶ This is read by Ternes (1982), Kubusch (1986) 236–43, Schmitzer (1990) 50–1 and Fabre-Seris (1995) 63 as avoiding the notion of a present Iron Age, by implication an attack on Augustan ideology.

¹¹⁷ *uer erat aeternum* (107). Within this, time was passing; *mollia securae peragebant otia gentes* (100) and there was a harvest from the 'unfallowed field': *nec renouatus ager grauidis canebat aristas* (110).

¹¹⁸ For the context see Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf (2001), in which it is numbered 56A. For Dicaearchian influence on later conceptions of the Golden Age in particular, see Kubusch (1986) 248–52.

idea, attributed to Aristotle, that the tyranny of Peisistratus was later reported as 'golden', bears witness to the fact that a much wider range of experiences may be considered good in retrospect.¹¹⁹

In *Metamorphoses* I, Ovid extends this logic to gloss the entire Hesiodic succession of races (or any metallic history) as a kind of regress, prompting readers to anticipate the decisive stage in the sequence from which all the others can be named. The retrospective judgement of the Golden era is confirmed and then delayed by the presentation of the Silver generation in comparative terms. *auro deterior; fuluo pretiosior aere* (*Met.* I.115) implies that the Silver race was labelled 'Silver' with at least partial reference to its 'intermediate' existence between Bronze and Gold. But the Bronze race too is judged as if in the light of what follows – it is considered 'not yet wicked' (*non scelerata tamen* 127) because an era of *really* criminal behaviour (*uenae peioris . . . aeuum* 128) is still to come. (Those who constituted the 'brazen' offspring did not think of themselves as transitional.) When the 'final' race of Iron is introduced with the advent of 'gold, more harmful than iron' (*ferro . . . nocentius aurum* 141–2), the regress becomes circular.

The resulting exposure of the process of periodization resurfaces in Book 15, as Pythagoras on his soapbox, urging recognition that the world is eternally changing, aims to detach his listeners from the world-view implied by the use of metallic labels. His doctrine of vegetarianism involves, first, demythologizing the concept of the Golden Age and rejecting the idea of qualitatively different stages in human development whose decline is beyond mortal control. There must be no consensus that the external conditions of nature have deteriorated; even today we do not lack milk or honey, and 'the kindly earth supplies sustenance' (15.81–2). For Ovid's reader, these details, along with the personification of the earth, ironically recall the most miraculous features of the Golden Age described in *Metamorphoses* I (cf. 1.97). Pythagoras strikes a Dicaearchean tone in making explicit the fact that the 'Golden' age

¹¹⁹ [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 16.7 – on this topic see Zatta (2010). In later antiquity, Lactantius *Div. Inst.* 7.15 remarks that the present times will be judged 'golden' by those suffering worse evils in the future.

label is our own group construct (15.96: *uetus illa aetas, cui fecimus aurea nomen*: 'that ancient age, to which we have given the name "golden"'). He then pointedly attributes ethical demise to an individual, 'whoever it was, who thrust down flesh into his greedy stomach' (15.104–5).¹²⁰ It is noticeable that once the individual has been introduced, metallic terms no longer appear – on Pythagoras' account, one could not pinpoint the moment at which the 'Silver' Age began.¹²¹ This helps to explain why Pythagoras asserts that it was an *individual* who 'paved the way for crime' (106) by tasting meat.¹²²

There is a striking twist to this tale, however, for later on in his speech, Pythagoras briefly refers to the Golden Age myth again, this time appropriating the most common contemporary version of the story, a shortened form of the narrative in Book 1, as he relegates the elements, human experience and geographical space to the same core principle of metamorphosis – 'thus have you passed from gold to iron, you ages/generations' (*sic ad ferrum uenistis ab auro, / saecula* 15.260–1).¹²³ (The subsequent geographical examples of metamorphosis similarly recall the 'data' of the transformations wrought by the flood and fire narratives from the first books of the poem.)¹²⁴ But having begun his discourse by turning away from the 'Golden Age' idea to a story of individuals, Pythagoras' authority to refer to the 'Iron Age' as 'now' at this later

¹²⁰ Hardie (in press) on 76–82 notes that the language used of the Golden Age recalls that of Polyphemus in *Met.* 13.810–14, in turn recalling both the quasi-golden age enjoyed by the Homeric Cyclopes and their cannibalism, here attacked by Pythagoras as the root of all evil.

¹²¹ This context for the phrase *quisquis fuit ille*, last used at 1.32 of the creator god (*quisquis fuit ille deorum*) may recall Jupiter as the 'individual' literally responsible for human destruction in *Met.* 1.

¹²² The idea of the individual is, of course, important for Pythagoras beyond the refutation of a truly 'Golden' era. Pythagoras' exhortation towards vegetarianism is based upon the possibility, according to his doctrine of metempsychosis, that an *individual* relative or friend has been reborn as the animal you are about to eat (15.141–2 is explained by 15.456–69 and glossed as a 'Thyestian banquet').

¹²³ It is significant that Pythagoras addresses the *saecula* directly, as if they were people; having just exposed the concepts of 'birth' and 'death' (*nasci* and *mori* 15.255–7) as ways of describing a mere renewal of forms, he is making the point that 'ages' and human 'races' amount to the same thing.

¹²⁴ So Hardie (in press) on lines 262–5 compares 1.297: 'Pythagoras might have seen relics of the flood.'

point is undercut. Conversely, the logical extension of his second presentation of the myth is that the idea of a stable starting-point is as illusory as the notion of an endpoint (an idea already anticipated by Ovid's treatment of 'gold' in the Iron Age).¹²⁵ These ways of undercutting the metallic scheme at each end of the poem may serve as cautions against looking for meaningful development in the *Metamorphoses* itself.

More broadly, Ovid's treatment of metallic terms provides book-ends to the *Metamorphoses* as a text that exposes the flaws in the stories (in) which we live. Evidence from the body of the poem begins right after the first version of the races narrative in Book 1. Having drawn attention to the fact that metallic labels are applied only in retrospect, the narrative calls into question the storyteller's authority to use the past to make pronouncements about the present. Jupiter, 'the ultimate representation of authority in the epic universe', is introduced as primary viewer of the 'sons' of the Giants' blood (1.163ff.) and tells of Lycaon, in what turns out to be Jupiter's only act of storytelling in the *Metamorphoses*.¹²⁶ Jupiter 'confirms' what we have already been told; but his internal audience's shocked sorrow for the human race (1.246–7) alerts readers to the fact that Jupiter's desire to destroy *all* humanity (*perdendum est mortale genus* 188) may be unwarranted by the example of Lycaon, given that not everyone was immune to the divine epiphany (vv. 220–1).¹²⁷ If Jupiter wanted to convince the assembled gods (and readers) of general human depravity, he should not have passed over 'how much impiety was found on every side' (214). Again, Jupiter's promise to the assembled gods that he would give them 'a race of miraculous origin, different from the first' (*subolem . . . priori / dissimilem populo . . . origine mira* 251–2) is not self-evidently true; the new race, our own,

¹²⁵ Cf. Wheeler (2000) 121, with Leach (1974) 132: 'the *aurea saecula* are useful primarily as a measure of mutability'. This use of the metallic myth may recall Lucretius' mischievous allusion to the metals in order to point out how their 'value' has changed over time (n. 5 above).

¹²⁶ Feldherr (2002) 171. Cf. Barchiesi (2002) 181 on the framing authority of Jupiter as speaker.

¹²⁷ Cf. Kronenberg (2009a) 159 on Virgil's use in *Georgics* 1 of the perjury of Laomedon's Troy (501–2) to explain the wider punishment of Romans at the end of the book: its loose connection to the current generation makes it a weak explanation for current misery.

is created in a way not dissimilar to the previous two (400–15),¹²⁸ and the presentation of the result, ‘thus we are a hard race’ (*inde genus durum sumus* 414) ‘confirms’ the sense of a link between this human race and the brood ‘of hard iron’ (*de duro . . . ferro* 127). The logic of the metallic narrative is here made ‘relevant’ in a way that questions Jupiter’s authority.¹²⁹

By undercutting the ‘historians’ within his poem in his engagement with traditions of rewriting and commenting on issues raised by Hesiod’s narrative of races, Ovid provokes reflection on his own narrative strategies and the senses in which his own *Metamorphoses* is a ‘universalizing history’. Myers, focusing on the creation narrative, finds Ovid ‘exploring the validity of alternate modes of explanation of the world: epic and philosophical, scientific and mythological’ and observes: ‘[the] narratological polyphony suggests that Ovid is more interested in playing with *how* authority is created and in drawing our attention to the stratagems of narrative authentication, than in maintaining a consistent and authoritative epic voice’.¹³⁰ I shall now argue that Ovid uses the races narrative, too, to focus attention on the power of narration to steer readers between multiple perspectives, such that the ability to juggle alternative stories re-emerges, in Book 1 at least, as a *Hesiodic* point.

5.3 Alternative accounts

It has only relatively recently been proposed that we should view the Hesiodic corpus as a framework of two complementary works, *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, establishing the power of Zeus at different stages of cosmic development and from different angles, respectively divine and human.¹³¹ One extension of this view holds that the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, focusing more closely on the Heroic

¹²⁸ As evidence that Prometheus similarly ‘animated’ the original mixture of earth and water, Fabre-Serris (2003) 134 cites Deucalion’s account of the first creation: *o utinam possim populos reparare paternis / artibus atque animas formatae infundere terrae* (1.363–4).

¹²⁹ Cf. Segal (2001a) 84–6 and Anderson (1989) on Lycaon as ‘paradigm’ for this point in the *Metamorphoses*.

¹³⁰ Myers (1994) 20–1; see also her p. 158.

¹³¹ Clay (2003) is the main proponent of this view of Hesiod.

Age, intermediary between gods and men, should be considered a thematic and chronological ‘supplement’ to the genuine Hesiodic pair of poems.¹³² The papyrological evidence, however, suggests that in antiquity the *Catalogue* was conceived and transmitted as a continuation of the *Theogony* (only).¹³³ Of relevance for our current focus, however, is the indisputable fact that across the three main poems attributed to Hesiod, we find a ‘range of ways of thinking about [the] falling-off from primal bliss into the conditions of pain and toil that humans now inhabit’.¹³⁴

The requirement to engage with more than one perspective is, as I demonstrated in ch. 2, a ‘Hesiodic’ point, emphasized in the *Works and Days*, whose broadest message emerges from the combination of many stories and narrative forms.¹³⁵ The speaker of this poem encourages its comparison with the contents of the *Theogony*; he has consciously revised its presentation of the genealogy of Strife, and will later allude to his inauguration as a poet.

The remainder of this chapter will make clear how, in this respect, ‘the richness of Hesiod stimulates Ovid’.¹³⁶ Ovid perhaps develops the ‘bifocal vision’ of Lucretius,¹³⁷ turning his lens on prior traditions of the shift between eras of the remote past and down to the present. It has been argued in reference to the Hesiodic *Catalogue* that Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* subtly flags divergent mythological genealogies found within the epic corpus.¹³⁸ I should like to focus on the alternatives present within Hesiod, demonstrating that recourse to Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, in particular, can explain some features of Ovid’s presentation of the races in relation to the rest of the poem. Focusing in turn on Ovid’s descriptions

¹³² Clay (2005) 27–8; on the grounds for her argument, see below, n. 175.

¹³³ See e.g. Hirschberger (2004) 42–7.

¹³⁴ Feeney (2007) 111. Clay (2003) 98 argues that the poems offer alternative accounts of the creation of humans, purposeful creations by gods in the anthropocentric *Works and Days*, but in the divinely focused *Theogony* apparently an accidental by-product of Ouranos’ castration.

¹³⁵ On the ‘dialectic’ between the ‘myth of races’ and the rest of the *Works and Days*, in particular the ‘confrontation’ between this story and that of Prometheus-Pandora, see Currie (2012).

¹³⁶ Landolfi (1996) 87. ¹³⁷ Fitzgerald (2012) 231 on Lucretius.

¹³⁸ Ziogas (2013) 70 on Phaethon’s disputed parentage. Perhaps Aratus paves the way here; see Gee (2013) 27 on the mutual incompatibility of the Hesiodic options for the genealogy of Astraea (*Ph.* 98–100).

of 'Golden', 'Silver' and 'Iron' stages in the story of humanity (5.3a–c), I shall then argue that the races narrative is for Ovid emblematic of Hesiod's *Works and Days* as a whole, suggesting that Ovid finds in Hesiod a legacy of 'alternative' storytelling perspectives (5.3d). The ultimate pay-off for attention to the balance between the races narrative and other presentations of humanity's shift from past to present is new light on a core question of Ovid's poem: whether we should view metamorphosis more as aetiology or as process.¹³⁹

5.3a The Golden Age

Ovid evidently engages with post-Hesiodic debates in his treatment of the best-known aspect of Hesiod's 'myth of the races' in antiquity, the idea that the earth once produced food spontaneously. It is my contention that Ovid's treatment of this theme provides a clue to his wider aims in treating the story. Already in Plato's *Statesman*, we have seen the αὐτόματον motif used as shorthand for the entire myth of Cronus' reign (*St.* 271c8–d1, e5, pp. 148–9 and p. 182 above). This feature of the Golden-Age life was so thoroughly entrenched in ideas of primeval humanity that to deny it (as did Aratus), to rationalize it (as did Dicaearchus) or to resituate it in the impending future (Virgil *Ecl.* 4.18–23) was to signal an independent intellectual agenda. One might well expect Ovid's treatment of this particular motif, therefore, to function as a clue to his wider aims in treating the metallic myth.

There is, first, an intriguing reapplication of the idea of spontaneous growth in Ovid's Golden Age. Ovid first uses the phrase *sponte sua*, the established Latin translation of αὐτόματον, to assert, not spontaneous nourishment, but spontaneous moral rectitude (*Met.* 1.90 – his Latin predecessors in transferring the motif to the question of law, although they go in other directions, are Lucretius *DRN* 5.1147¹⁴⁰ and Virgil *Aen.* 7.203–4). Not till the end of Ovid's full description of this first period does he refer to the

¹³⁹ Feldherr (2002) 169–74 uses the stories of Lycaon and Daphne to show that evaluation of the poem as a whole depends on whether each metamorphosis is viewed as an ending or merely a transition.

¹⁴⁰ On this line, see Gale (2009) 195.

earth’s unforced fertility. At this point, however, the idea emerges with a vengeance, repeated five times in different ways in *Met.* 1.101–4:

*ipsa quoque immunis rastroke intacta nec ullis
saucia uomeribus per se dabat omnia tellus,
contentique cibus nullo cogente creatis
arbutos . . . legebant.*

The earth herself, free of cost, untouched by hoe or wounded by ploughshare, by herself was giving all, and men, content with food created unforced by anyone, were gathering arbutus fruit.

The idea of spontaneity is then repeated three times further in vv. 108–10:

*mulcebant zephyri natos sine semine flores;
mox etiam fruges tellus inarata ferebat,
nec renouatus ager grauidis canebat aristis.*

zephyr breezes caressed the flowers emerging seedless; then the earth, untilled, brought forth the grain, and the unfallowed field grew white with heavy ears of wheat.

The close imitation of Hesiod (cf. *WD* 117–18) perhaps would not be surprising but for Aratus’ intervening insistence that there was ploughing in the Golden Age, but the following emphasis on the point is extraordinary and suggests that Ovid may be attaching a wider importance to the notion of ‘unsown’ fertility in his poem.

The idea of ‘seedless’ growth is especially provocative, given Ovid’s initial declaration that *aurea . . . sata est aetas* (89), an expression unparalleled in Roman poetry.¹⁴¹ The idea that the ‘golden generation’ was ‘sown’ or ‘planted’ recalls Ovid’s original, double gloss on how ‘man was born’ (*natus homo est* 78): either directly ‘from divine seed’ (*diuino semine* 78) or from the mixture of water with earth which retained ‘seeds of its kindred sky’ (*cognati semina caeli* 81).¹⁴² The idea of spontaneous fertility now emerges in prominent contrast to both options. As the story

¹⁴¹ Cf. Bömer (1969) on *Met.* 1.89. Many have noted that the word order recalls Hesiod *WD* 109.

¹⁴² The passive voice at 1.78 keeps these options open.

of the world's population continues, a deeper issue emerges from this juxtaposition of ideas. Those initial descriptions of mortal creation are each 'over-determined' in combining a plant analogy with an idea of 'making' or 'forming'; the god 'made' man (*fecit* 78) or Prometheus 'moulded [the mixture] into the form of . . . gods' (*finxit in effigiem . . . deorum* 83). The second account of human creation, the creation of men from the blood of Giants (1.156–60 with *natos* 162) develops this complexity into a two-stage narrative of breeding and moulding into human form, a sentimental metamorphosis on the part of Earth ('so that some trace of her own stock should remain').¹⁴³ The third reproduction, from Deucalion and Pyrrha, involves a profusion of different stages. Deucalion and Pyrrha throw behind them stones that undergo a multiple metamorphosis, during which 'those thrown by the man's hands took on the form of men, and the female was repaired (*reparata est*) by the woman's throw' (412–13).¹⁴⁴

To this last account the narrator briefly appends the notice that 'the earth spontaneously produced the rest of the animal life in diverse forms': *cetera diuersis tellus animalia formis / sponte sua peperit* (416–17). In its new context, Ovid's re-application of the traditional motif seems deeply disingenuous. It points out in retrospect that to insist on the spontaneity of Golden-Age nourishment is to *avoid* explanation of its origins. Indeed, a little later in Book 1, the idea of 'spontaneous generation' recurs explicitly with this motive. Jupiter, when challenged by Juno to explain the appearance of his white heifer (the transformed Io), 'lied that she had been born from the earth, so that her origin would cease to be sought' (1.615–16).

No wonder, then, that the narrator's assertion of the spontaneous production of animal life, at 1.416–17, turns out to be somewhat ironic, when there follow twenty lines in Lucretian vein: the warm, moist earth made seeds grow, in what readers would recognize

¹⁴³ Fabre-Serris (2003) 134. The earth herself 'animates the warm blood' (*calidum . . . animasse cruorem* 158) but the specifically 'human' aspect of this 'inspiration' stems, as before, from a *formative* act: *in faciem uertisse hominum* (160 – compare 83).

¹⁴⁴ This is another early hint of the idea that in metamorphosis, like the sexual reproduction that Deucalion and Pyrrha do *not* carry out, the new creation retains some element of its 'parent' / 'origin', i.e. agent or original self – cf. Lycaon as paradigm, with Feldherr (2002).

as the normal process of plant germination (417–37). Combined with the foregoing brief statement of the 'miracle', the Lucretian perspective reprises in close-up its presence in Ovid's narrative of the Golden Age, which contains elements of both 'Hesiodic' and 'anti-Hesiodic' traditions about the first men on earth. 'Soft primitivism' (an emphasis on the earth's miraculous fertility and the ease of human life, 1.100–2, 108–12) is blended with the 'hard primitivism' of rationalizing culture-histories, according to which humans had to forage for their food (gathering acorns and berries, 1.104–6).¹⁴⁵ In its second context, through the Lucretian elaboration, Ovid effectively casts doubt on the traditional, much-emphasized 'miracle' marking the primeval era – perhaps it was simply that Hesiod's narrative pace was too fast. The idea that *sponte sua* can be used disingenuously as a narrative perspective¹⁴⁶ implicitly undermines any sense of 'decline' in material conditions, and, equally, the idea that conditions of really spontaneous growth could return.

Ovid's treatment of the *sponte sua* motif has a twofold importance for the rest of his poem. On one level, of course, it paves the way for the permeable boundary between humans and plants in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁴⁷ More subtly, it foreshadows the poem's inherently dual presentation of objects and events of the natural world, both as 'wonders' (*mira*) and as perfectly ordinary. The poem's explicit presentation of this idea expresses it the other way round. Pythagoras' anti-Lucretian discourse reveals that the natural processes of the earth and the normal processes of birth and growth could be categorized as *mira*.¹⁴⁸ Unless you knew, you would not believe that birds were born from eggs (15.387–8) – every natural

¹⁴⁵ As Kubusch (1986) 231–4 puts it, Ovid, in fusing the metallic myth with a [Dicaearchan] culture history, offers two successive interpretations of the Hesiodic assertion that 'all good things' were available.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Virgil *Geo.* 2.47 on wild trees as those which 'of their own accord raise themselves to the light': *sponte sua* is here used only by contrast with the fruit-bearing trees the farmer must himself cultivate.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. McKim (1980) for a view of how the multiplicity and complexity of human creation in Book 1 alerts the reader to the nature of man in the rest of the poem, and Fabre-Seris (2003) for analysis of the subsequent 'plant-like' creations of man, e.g. at *Met.* 3.105–14 and 7.123.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Myers (1994) 146 on Pythagoras' reversal of the Lucretian doctrine *non est mirandum* (*DRN* 4.595).

action of cause and effect could be regarded as a spontaneous metamorphosis.

This may be seen as an Ovidian twist on the ideology of a present 'Golden Age': as Pythagoras implies in Book 15, the natural world is still producing *sponte sua*, right under our noses.¹⁴⁹ It contributes, too, to a perverse vision of a 'returning' Golden Age in the account of the plague on Aegina, during which wool falls off sick sheep 'by itself' (*sponte sua lanaeque cadunt* 7.541); perhaps a grim twist on Virgil's memorable vision of the Golden Age in *Eclogue* 4, a time when 'natural vermillion will clothe the grazing lambs' (*sponte sua sandyx pascentis uestiet agnos* 45, trans. Lee).¹⁵⁰

A more satirical take on the political notion of a 'return' to the Golden Age under Augustus may be present in the apotheoses of Aeneas, Romulus, Caesar and (anticipated) Augustus in *Metamorphoses* 14 and 15, in that (these) humans become again 'as gods', like the Hesiodic race of gold – but not on earth.¹⁵¹ Ovid's prayer in conclusion likens Caesar's inferiority to his 'son' Augustus to Saturn's inferiority to Jupiter (850–60), and addresses the newly apotheosized heroes (companions of Aeneas and Romulus, 861–70) as gods, as he hopes that the day of Augustus' deification may be far off. The syntax of 15.746–50 has been seen by some scholars as a mischievous hint that Augustus 'made' (up) Caesar's catasterism 'so that his son might not be born of mortal seed' (15.760)¹⁵² – a 'tautological poetics of divinity'.¹⁵³ The effect of Ovid's phrasing here is to suggest, ironically, that *man* is the origin of both mortals and gods, whose differentiation seems to be the goal of the metallic story in Hesiod (*WD* 108).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Evans (2008) 49–51 on combinations of Golden-Age spontaneity and Iron-Age violence in descriptions of the landscape in the races myth, in view of the rural rapes and punishments littering the *Metamorphoses*.

¹⁵⁰ Ovid may equally count Virgil as a predecessor, insofar as the *Georgics* itself 'entices the audience with what we might call "returns" to the Golden age', including the vision of the plague at Noricum in *Georgics* 3 – see Nappa (2005) 39.

¹⁵¹ I owe this thought to Emma Buckley.

¹⁵² For the various ironies in the treatment of Caesar's paternity of Augustus, see Hardie (in press) on 15.749–50, 760–1, 855–8 and 868–70.

¹⁵³ Feldherr (2010) 71. Commenting on the poem's conclusion, he recalls (128) the core uncertainty about humankind in Ovid's account of creation: are we *of* the gods or *like* the gods? I am reminded of Hesiod's 'godlike' Golden race.

Ovid concludes by wishing that the death of Augustus is 'later than my lifetime' (*nostro senior aeuo* 15.868) and anticipating the eternal life of his *own* work. If apotheoses suggest a return of Golden-Age living-conditions, we may find in 15.868 a reversal of Hesiod's mysterious personal wish to be 'born later' (*WD* 175, the line triggering debate in antiquity about whether Hesiod expected a return of the Golden Age). Such a context of citation would suit our sense that Ovid asserts a personal 'golden' renaissance, at least for his work not 'devoured by age' (15.872 – cf. *WD* 113–14 of Hesiod's Golden men). Finally the artist asserts success.¹⁵⁴

5.3b *The Silver race*

In using post-Hesiodic developments to fill out Hesiod's description of the 'golden' life, Ovid situates himself in a long critical tradition, even if his particular explanation is a novel one. He has far fewer extant predecessors, however, in his treatment of the Silver race. Virgil in *Aeneid* 8 presented the *second* generation of humanity as the Golden one, after Saturn had come to earth to civilize the first, 'untaught race' (*genus indocile* 8.321). Insofar as Ovid's account of the Silver race in the *Metamorphoses* puts Jupiter in charge, intervening in the conditions of the world, it recalls *Georgics* 1, in which Jupiter brings the initial conditions of paradise to an end for the benefit of the human race, stopping the unforced flow of nourishment from the earth in order to prevent mortals from becoming lazy (*Geo.* 1.121–46). There is nothing explicitly providential about Ovid's Jupiter, however; Ovid has him create the seasons, a feature which seems to be completely original in the context of a universal history of humanity,¹⁵⁵ although the boisterous weather described in *Catalogue of Women*, fr. 204.124–8 has been interpreted (perhaps with Virgil in view) as the onset of the first autumn, implicitly attributed to

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Leach (1974) 132 on Ovid's invention of Midas' 'golden touch' as supplying the theme, elsewhere conspicuously absent, of the artist as recreator of a lost Golden Age: 'Once his material golden age has proven a failure, he turns, [like] many poets . . . , to seek a new innocence in the forest.'

¹⁵⁵ See Bömer (1969) 58 on *Met.* 1.116.

Zeus as part of his decision to end the easy conditions of life under which mortals had previously lived.¹⁵⁶

All that is 'Silver' about the second stage of the sequence in Ovid, I would suggest, is that his aims include the recollection of Hesiod's *Works and Days* in particular, as well as of Virgil and Lucretius, to reveal the conflict between the mythological and anthropological perspectives on human development. On the surface, 'what happened' in Ovid's Silver Age is precisely the reverse of its events according to Hesiod.¹⁵⁷ In the account in the *Works and Days*, men ceased to live 'at their mother's side ... each in his own house' (*WD* 130–1: παρὰ μητέρι κεδνῇ / ... ὧ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ). According to Ovid, in the Silver Age 'then for the first time they went into houses' (*Met.* 1.121: *tum primum subiere domos*). Ovid seems to have registered Hesiod's sudden use of the term οἶκος, for he repeats its Latin equivalent: previously, 'their homes had been caves and dense bushes' (*domus antra fuerunt / et densi frutices* 121–2). *frutices* recalls the early stages in Lucretius' account of the gradual civilization and 'softening' of man (see *DRN* 5.955–6) and this aids the possibility that Ovid is here interpreting Hesiod's παρὰ μητέρι κεδνῇ in Lucretian terms, as a metaphor for these men's reliance on the natural sustenance of the earth, to be termed 'mother' many times in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁵⁸ The resulting irony is that the one age in Hesiod's account which seems to involve a real decline in material and moral standards is the one that furnishes a 'progressive' account on an anthropological reading.¹⁵⁹

Ovid at this point ignores the most prominent feature of the Silver race in Hesiod – their century-long childhood and rapid decline once adults – and indeed we do not find in Ovid's races the increasing propensity to age displayed by the races in Hesiod's sequence, which in retrospect is evident as an index of declining

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Barchiesi (2005) 170 on *Met.* 1.107–12, with West (1985) 119–20. Clay (2005) 33 interprets this fragment instead as an account of the storm at Aulis that delayed the Greek expedition to Troy.

¹⁵⁷ The intervening Aratean account gives no concrete information about the Silver generation.

¹⁵⁸ Indeed, she 'gives birth' to the Giants soon after the metallic myth (1.157–60). For Lucretius' emphasis on earth as mother, cf. *DRN* 5.795–827.

¹⁵⁹ The combination of technological progress and moral decadence in the Silver Age is expanded in Avienus, as Bellandi *et al.* (2001) 91 note.

morality; while Golden men are ageless, Iron men will in future be born grey-haired (*WD* 181).¹⁶⁰ In *Metamorphoses* 9, however, there is a whole sequence of stories in which human age is a subject of divine metamorphosis (9.394–439). In this passage, following the miraculous rejuvenation of Iolaüs, we find a prophecy by Themis which intensifies elements both of the Silver race in Hesiod and his nightmarish vision of the Iron future: there will be war between brothers (9.405 – cf. *WD* 184), acts of parricide (9.407 – cf. *WD* 185) and the transformation of 'beardless boys' to men (9.417 – cf. *WD* 132–3, 181). Such a technique of 'displacement', of isolating and redeploying traditional features of the metallic races narrative elsewhere in the poem, is comparable to Ovid's re-deployment of the *sponte sua* motif and indeed of many 'expected' elements in other myths that he relates.¹⁶¹

In retrospect, the memory of Hesiod's races becomes the vehicle for a new connection between the body of the poem and Book 15, where Pythagoras brings together the seasons and the ageing motif; he develops at some length the comparison between the yearly cycle of seasons and the four-part lifespan of a man (15.199–213) in which spring is the first stage, compared to childhood. Here, even the normal process of ageing is regarded as metamorphosis, and is combined with a periodization traditionally attributed to Pythagoras, one that had already been applied to the history of Rome.¹⁶²

A broader point to which Ovid's presentation of the Silver race draws attention is the Hesiodic assumption that human history is shaped by divine intervention (for better or worse). Somewhat like the *sponte sua* motif, this premise (which drives the discontinuous sequence of races in Hesiod) is treated by Ovid so as to direct attention to the narrator's ability to switch between perspectives.

¹⁶⁰ On age-grading in Hesiod's races, see Falkner (1989).

¹⁶¹ Compare e.g. the story of acquiring eternal age-without-youth, usually identified with Tithonus (mentioned obliquely at 9.421), given to the Sibyl in Book 14. For the related issue of the (once-and-for-all) 'analogical substitution' of stories expected in a sequence, see Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) on Narcissus substituting for Oedipus in *Met.* 3.

¹⁶² Cf. Diog. Laert. *Vitae philosophorum* 8.10 on the Pythagorean doctrine. Alonso-Núñez (1982) 5–7 asserts that the comparison between the ages of life and those of a civil state was a topic in the rhetorical schools, positing Cicero *De re publica* 2.1.3 as another precedent for [the Elder?] Seneca's formulation of the 'doctrine' of four ages of Rome.

It is particularly evident in Ovid's handling of the transition to the Silver race (which passed without comment in Aratus): 'after Saturn had been sent to dark Tartarus, and the world was under the sway of Jove, the Silver race came in' (1.113–14: *postquam Saturno tenebrosa in Tartara misso / sub Ioue mundus erat, subiit argentea proles*).¹⁶³ The elision of the Hesiodic theomachy in an ablative absolute is something of a shock. Saturn has not been mentioned before in the text, Jupiter only in a formula (106: *Iouis arbore*); their relation to the creator of the world is left mysterious.¹⁶⁴ This reference suddenly recasts human history as the result of generational war. Jupiter's role after this is by turns prominent (in the Silver Age)¹⁶⁵ and elusive (the Bronze and Iron eras – a creator *may* barely be present as the subject of the singular active verbs recording the hidden wealth in the earth, at 139–40, unless we take the earth itself as the subject here). As the metallic myth comes to an end, all divine forces, as in Hesiod and Aratus, apparently withdraw their concern ('the maiden Astraea, last of the immortals, abandoned the blood-soaked earth', 149–50). Yet the hubristic Giants are destroyed directly by Jupiter's thunderbolt, and it soon appears that he is watching the behaviour of their descendants (163–4: 'when the Saturnian father saw these things from his high citadel, he groaned').

The flickering presence of Jupiter in this account not only recalls by contrast the insistent presence of Zeus in and around Hesiod's metallic story, but also offers an ironic salute to the emphasis on Jupiter's responsibility for *labor* in Virgil's *Georgics* 1.121–46.¹⁶⁶ Intervening, as it were, into the debate between Lucretius and Virgil on the (de)mythologization of human history, Ovid has

¹⁶³ In Hesiod, Cronus has given way to Zeus some time in the Silver era – as in Ovid, the account assumes knowledge of the *Theogony*. The interpolated *WD* 173a–e add a divine reconciliation to the traditional theomachy.

¹⁶⁴ McKim (1980) 102.

¹⁶⁵ Here, the forceful verbs used to describe Jupiter's creation of the seasons ('shortened': *contraxit tempora ueris* 116, 'urged on': *spatiis exegit quattuor annum* 118) contrast pointedly with the emphasis on the Golden Age, in which men lived 'with no avenger': *uindice nullo* (89).

¹⁶⁶ *WD* 105, 108, 109, 122, 128 etc. Barchiesi (2005) 166–7 notes the omission. On tensions between Hesiodic and other perspectives in Virgil's re-assertion of Jupiter's control over mortal development, cf. first La Penna (1962) and, on political motives, Nappa (2005) 26, 28.

transformed divine agency into an idea that the narrator can highlight or hide. This power has been made evident already in Ovid’s description of Chaos, which sometimes employs metonymy (e.g. Titan, Phoebe, Amphitrite at 1.10, 11, 14) but also speaks of the earth merely as *tellus* (1.12, 16) rather than, e.g. Gaia.¹⁶⁷ In the *Metamorphoses*, the different possibilities of narrative perspective on the role of the gods will become an explicit issue in the confrontation between Arachne and Minerva in Book 6.

The context of divergent traditions may be found at the level of word-play in Ovid’s accounts of these first two eras of mankind. Together with the remarkable emphasis on ‘unsown’ fertility in the Golden Age, Ovid’s allusion to the overthrow of ‘Saturn’ at 1.113 explains mortal decline both with an elided *Theogony* and with an etymological joke; once the ‘spirit of sowing’¹⁶⁸ had disappeared below the surface of the earth, men had to dig for it (123–4: *seminum primum ... Cerealia ... / obruta sunt*).¹⁶⁹ Ovid thus implicitly ‘corrects’ Aratus, and supplements Hesiod’s narrative of the Golden race, by explaining *why* agriculture began only in the Silver Age.¹⁷⁰

5.3c *Iron men and Giants’ offspring*

Ovid’s playful double vision of ‘miraculous’ and rationalizing perspectives has a pre-Hellenistic precedent in the elaborate mechanical framework in which Plato’s Elean Stranger situates the reigns of Cronus and Zeus (*St.* 269a–72b; see pp. 151–3 above, with n. 193). Ovid offers the narrative equivalent of the way in which the Elean Stranger’s story consciously allows for

¹⁶⁷ Tarrant (2004) capitalizes *Terra* at 1.12 but not at 1.14 (probably because 1.12 completes a syntactical triad: negative ... verb ... personification). On the Roman ‘exploration’ of metonymy as a signal of the ‘otherness’ of the Graeco-Roman poetic world, see Hunter (2006) 67–79.

¹⁶⁸ On sowing as an etymological component of *Saturnia regna*, cf. Michalopoulos (2001). On etymological play in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. Tissol (1997) 172–6. The joke may be seen already in Virgil *Geo.* 2.173–4 – see Varro *Ling.* 5.64, with Smolenaars (1987) 396 on Virgil’s use of the Aratean Golden Age.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. the attempts of Fontenrose (1974) 6–7 to fill in Hesiod’s gaps along these lines.

¹⁷⁰ For Ziogas (2013) 59, Ovid’s emphasis on the ‘unploughed earth’ (*tellus inarata*) of the Golden Age implicitly corrects Hesiod’s use of ἀρουρα, strictly ‘arable land’, so unsuitable for Hesiod’s Golden Age. I wonder too if *inarata* punningly negates ‘Aratus’ introduction of Golden-Age sowing.

alternative perspectives on the course of history. Recollection of Plato's *Statesman* story facilitates my suggestion about Ovid's reading of Hesiod's sequence, not only because Plato's text toys with the perception of Olympian gods behind the scenes, but also because it paves the way for Ovidian experiments with the relation between event and narrative. As I pointed out in [chapter 3](#), the Elean Stranger's presentation of the reversing cosmos steers a convoluted course between the τέλος of the cosmic rotation and the (discursive) τέλος of the current λόγος about it. The Elean Stranger shows that narrative has power to 'direct' (perceptions of) the cosmos; Ovid's narrator, as I shall show, highlights the fact that audience perceptions of 'decline', as well as of the miraculous (see above pp. 239–41), depend on the pace of the narrative.¹⁷¹

The end of Ovid's metallic myth offers a good example. Ovid's 'Iron' race is juxtaposed with the exploits of the Giants and the fast-forwarded account of the Giants' offspring, which notes only how they turned out (*Met.* 1.160–2: 'that brood too was (*fuit*) contemptuous of the gods, savage, very greedy for slaughter, and violent'). The syntax and sentiment is comparable to Hesiod's brief description of the Bronze race, created from ash trees 'terrible and mighty: they cared for the painful works of Ares and for acts of violence' (*WD* 145–6: δεινόν τε καὶ ὄβριμον· οἷσιν Ἄρης / ἔργ' ἔμελλε στονόεντα καὶ ὕβριες). Ovid's summary about the Giants' offspring, 'you would know they were born from blood' (162: *scires e sanguine natos*), is provocative, since this impious brood strongly resembles the Iron descendants of a race created *ultimately* from 'seeds of the sky' (81).¹⁷² In so equating the results of his own extended metallic myth and of the shortest account in Hesiod's sequence, Ovid provokes the thought that all the hubristic races in Hesiod might be stories of decline from a golden state, compressed

¹⁷¹ This too has a Platonic precedent, in the varieties of pace and perspective on the decline of Kallipolis, in *Republic* 3 and 8. Cf. above p. 119.

¹⁷² See Ziogas (2013) 61 on Ovid's etymological play on *Gigantes*. Jupiter's own tendency to destructive violence (cf. *Met.* 1.154–5, 188, 253–74, with Cole (2008) 120) further suggests that the 'divine image' is not so different from 'blood of giants' with regard to a violent origin.

to varying degrees.¹⁷³ The potential for compression is, of course, further exemplified by Pythagoras’ one-line version of the metallic myth at 15.260–1.

For Ovid, then, Hesiod’s ‘myth of the races’ and its multifaceted reception is an inheritance through which to expose the narrator’s control in presenting accounts of human decline. The possibility of choosing between alternative perspectives is a point particularly felt in the *Works and Days* itself, in that Hesiod introduces the myth in the *Works and Days* as a ξτερο[ς] λόγος[ς] (106) after the story of Prometheus and Pandora. A second look at the novel features of Ovid’s narrative of metallic races suggests that they work also to evoke the *Works and Days* more broadly, prompting wider consideration of what Ovid’s narrator may be indicating about his own project through allusions to that of Hesiod.

5.3d Ovid’s ‘little Works and Days’

If Ovid is aiming to make use of the fact that Hesiod provokes a legacy offering several different views on human experience, one might expect a retelling of the Prometheus-Pandora story, the most memorable example of ‘alternative’ accounts in the Hesiodic corpus; versions of this story are prominent in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*,¹⁷⁴ while the *Catalogue* is reported (Sch. Ap. Rhod. 3.1068 = fr. 2 M–W) to have featured Deucalion, son of Prometheus and Pandora, in its first book.¹⁷⁵ Pandora, however, does not feature in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁷⁶

In the broad context of Classical literature, this omission may not be a polemic one, given that in what survives, the ancient textual reception of Pandora offers slim pickings; potential allusions are

¹⁷³ Compare Barchiesi (2002) 197 on the narration of the *Metamorphoses*: ‘the alternation of short and long narratives is a constant invitation to compare and contrast’ and ‘the authority of the primary narrator is established by ... *laying bare* the conventions [my italics]’.

¹⁷⁴ On these two accounts and the acceptance of alternatives in ‘archaic thought’, cf. Rowe (1983).

¹⁷⁵ Clay (2005) 27–8 argues that the ‘hybrid’ origin of mankind from Prometheus is a conscious attempt to link the *Catalogue* to the two other Hesiodic compositions and rework the Prometheus story for the new context. See also Tsagalis (2009) 159 and Ziogas (2013) 63–6 on the role of all three stories near the start of their respective poems.

¹⁷⁶ Noted by Evans (2008) 50.

found (e.g. in Semonides, discussed below pp. 296–7) but very few direct revisions of her role (unlike the stories of Prometheus and of the races).¹⁷⁷ The picture might look very different if (e.g.) Sophocles' satyr-play *Pandora* were extant. It has ingeniously been argued that Pandora is better considered as a concept, a recognition of 'alterity' in the world-as-it-is, which underlies certain genres requiring strong differentiation between speaker and addressee (such as didactic epic, or Roman love elegy), and even the difference between surface and deeper meaning in texts more broadly.¹⁷⁸

In the case of the *Metamorphoses*, the detail in which Ovid rewrites the metallic myth highlights by contrast Pandora's absence and seems to have stimulated scholars to look for her latent presence. Elements of Hesiod's Pandora narratives have been found variously displaced in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁷⁹ Just before the 'Golden' Age is first detailed, Prometheus ('son of Iapetus') is posited as the alternative creator of humankind out of water and earth (1.80–6), a post-Hesiodic tradition (Apollodorus 1.7) which obviously recalls the creation of Pandora by Hephaestus. Further echoes are found in Venus' animation of the statue of a woman courted by its creator Pygmalion; it has been argued that echoes of Hesiod's Pandora myth here reveal the way in which Ovid has transformed a story of misogyny into one more suitable to Roman love elegy.¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Prometheus' Hesiodic function, of challenging the authority of Zeus through a deceptive feast, has been given to the impious mortal Lycaon; divine punishment for mankind as a whole follows, but instead of Pandora it is a near-universal flood.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Musäus (2004) surveys references, possible allusions and exceptional retellings (e.g. Babrius 58 – there is nothing detailed in Classical Latin) before moving on to the early modern period. On Semonides, cf. Hunter (2014) 157–66.

¹⁷⁸ Kenaan (2008). ¹⁷⁹ On 'displacement', see n. 161 above.

¹⁸⁰ Segal (1998) 18, focusing on the adornment of each 'woman' (*Met.* 10.259–75 with *WD* 73–5). Clay (2003) 123 on the *Theogony* notes that the Woman's initial lack of voice makes her a sort of statue. Indeed, Ovid's narrative syntactically recalls and reverses Pandora's 'resemblance to a maiden': the statue 'had the face of a real maiden' (*uirginis est uerae facies*, *Met.* 10.250 – cf. *WD* 63: παρθενικῆς ... εἶδος), and Pygmalion wishes for a wife 'like my ivory girl' (*Met.* 10.276: *similis mea ... eburnae* – cf. *Th.* 572: παρθένω ... ἱκελον).

¹⁸¹ For a detailed reading of such echoes, see Feldherr (2010) 131–5. Perhaps Jupiter's flood also literalizes the 'full sea' of evils released by Pandora (*WD* 101: πλεῖη ... θάλασσα).

Other allusions to the havoc wrought by the Hesiodic Pandora may be found within the races narrative itself. Consider the events marking the outbreak of the Iron Age according to Ovid:

*fugere pudor uerumque fidesque;
in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolique
insidiaeque et uis et amor sceleratus habendi.*

there fled away shame, truth and faith, and in their place came in tricks and plots and snares and force and wicked love of possession. (*Metamorphoses* 1.129–31)

While the first line evokes the flight of Αἰδώς and Νέμεσις, the climax of Hesiod’s history of humankind(s), the triple ingress of evils finds a Hesiodic precedent in the outburst of evils into the world, with which the story of Pandora concludes (*WD* 95–104). In so conflating the conclusions of these stories in the *Works and Days*, Ovid points to their aetiological equivalence in Hesiod. In antiquity, this move appears to be made first in Theognis’ ‘Hymn to Hope’ (vv. 1,135–46), which combines the scrap of consolation in Hesiod’s Pandora narrative in the *Works and Days*, that Hope was left behind in the jar, with the departure of the Virtues at the end of the races narrative.¹⁸² But Ovid perhaps subordinates Pandora to the races because the aetiology of the former is less easy to counter; according to Ovid’s rewriting of metallic scheme, as I have shown, the entire hierarchy can be undone (gold is in fact even worse than iron) and, as his Pythagoras will emphasize, in the metamorphosis of human experience, nothing is final.¹⁸³

Allusions to Pandora within the races narrative may also point to its broader recollections of memorable Hesiodic themes. The real proof of Iron-Age iniquity is that this generation ‘dug up riches hidden in the bowels of the earth’ (*Met.* 1.138–40: *uiscera terrae / quasque recondiderat . . . / effodiuntur opes*). While the theme of concealment is prominent in Hesiod’s Prometheus-Pandora narratives, Ovid’s formulation equally recalls their wider context

¹⁸² Carrière (1996) 407 describes this as ‘la première glose consciente’ on the two passages of the *Works and Days*. See above section 3.2 on the aggressively positive recombination of elements by Plato’s Protagoras.

¹⁸³ On the stepwise succession of races as a long-range metamorphosis of humankind towards destruction, see Due (1974) 100, cited in Barchiesi (2005) 166 on *Met.* 1.89–150.

in the *Works and Days*. Although present already in the *Amores* (3.8.35–8), the image of wealth hidden in the earth gains force if considered as a cynical transformation of the basic premise about labour in Hesiod's didactic poem.¹⁸⁴ For Hesiod, men today are eager to work, because Zeus set the good Strife 'in the roots of the earth' (*WD* 19: γαίης ἐν ῥίζησι), and they have to work 'for the gods have hid mortal livelihood' (42: κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν); Prometheus-Pandora is then narrated as the founding instance of this act. When Ovid specifies that *opes* buried in *uiscera terrae* are 'spurs of evil' (*Met.* 1.140: *inritamenta malorum*), he re-conflates the good Strife, with which the Hesiodic speaker nuances a previous account (οὐκ ἄρα μοῦνον ἔην *WD* 11 – contrast *Th.* 225), with that 'cruel' Strife which 'fosters evil' (*WD* 14–15: κακὸν . . . ὀφέλλει, / σχετλίῃ).

By incorporating in his own 'myth of races' aspects of its context in Hesiod, Ovid – like Aratus – 'reads' the Hesiodic sequence of races as the heart of Hesiod's wider project of explaining to his brother Perses humanity's place in the world. Ovid in some ways adopts Aratus' reading of Hesiod: for example, in asserting the lack of sailing in the Golden Age, and in concluding the whole account with the flight of Astraea. Yet he treats these motifs ironically – the flight of Astraea, for example, is no longer a fundamental indicator of decline, but merely an additional one, following the departure of *fides* and the rest.¹⁸⁵ Again, in Ovid's accent on the lack of law in the Golden Age (*Met.* 1.89–92), the detail of the laws written on bronze tablets is distinctly Roman, recalling the quantity of Augustan legislation,¹⁸⁶ but we may recall that the *Works and Days* begins with a similarly bitter, concrete reference to contemporary legal activity. Hesiod expresses his disgust at Perses hanging around the agora spying on the 'disputes' (*WD* 29: νεῖκεα) and urges that they settle their own dispute privately, with the justice of Zeus rather than that of the 'bribe-eating magistrates' (35–6). Ovid,

¹⁸⁴ Compare Gale (2013) on Lucretius' identification and transformation of the opening myths of the *Works and Days* in relation to the core premises of the poem.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Franchet d'Espèrey (1997) 181: 'Ovide a perçu que les deux schémas (le ballet des vices et des vertus et l'envol d'Astrée) sans être vraiment superposables, étaient analogues.'

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Galinsky (1981) 200, Williams (1978) 58–9.

in denying the need for a *uindex*,¹⁸⁷ brings Hesiod's attitude up to date. Rather than following Aratus in celebrating 'the reign of Justice in primitive life',¹⁸⁸ he expands in 1.92–3 the rejection of fear and *forced* security associated with law.

If it is granted that Ovid's account of the races recalls more broadly their original prompt in the *Works and Days*, the following story of Lycaon may also engage the *Works and Days*' narrative build-up to its core message.¹⁸⁹ Lycaon's transformation into a wolf, and the delayed account of the punishment for general human impiety (*Met.* 1.188, 253–61), effectively 'answer' Hesiod's 'fable' of the impious hawk and the nightingale (*WD* 202–12), with its apparently delayed moral, *not* to behave like the birds and fish who eat each other (because Zeus gave us justice instead, *WD* 274–80). Hesiod's moral of not eating animals is then given a new rationale in the cosmically framed 'Empedoclean' didactic speech of Pythagoras at the end of the poem. The permeable boundary between humans and animals, of which Lycaon was the first example in the *Metamorphoses*, reappears in the form of Pythagoras' doctrine of metempsychosis, itself part of the universal rule of history; nothing lasts¹⁹⁰ (Pythagoras gives the metallic *saecula* as the first example of this, at 15.259–61). Pythagoras' didactic recasting of the races narrative encourages the view that his 'Empedoclean [and Lucretian] epos' finds in the multifaceted didactic utterance of the *Works and Days* an important, albeit outdated, predecessor to Ovid's grand essay *de rerum natura*.

Perhaps this emphasis on 'essential Hesiod' explains why we find in the races narrative in *Metamorphoses* I the seeds of Pythagoras'

¹⁸⁷ On the associations of *uindex* as it might relate to Augustus, see Barchiesi (2005) on *Met.* 1.89–90.

¹⁸⁸ So Lovejoy and Boas (1935) 43, but Ovid's account of the Golden and Silver ages may be read as a comment to the effect that Astraea as an enforcer of Justice is not needed among those who are 'naturally' just – compare Bellandi *et al.* (2001) 44 on Germanicus.

¹⁸⁹ Ovid would then be finding in Hesiod a predecessor for the 'collocative' nature of the *Metamorphoses*, described by Keith (1992) 27–8: 'narrative organization, wherein each episode in a series of tales shares recurrent plot features and thereby offers a commentary on its companions'.

¹⁹⁰ Hardie (2009) 139, updating Hardie (1995), notes that the discovery of the Strasbourg papyrus may encourage us to consider Pythagoras' combination of a lecture on the cyclicity of nature and a doctrine on the transmigration of souls genuinely 'Empedoclean'.

emphasis on the 'seasons' of a natural lifespan (15.199–213). Describing the period of the Silver race in Book 1, Ovid asserts a new experience of time under Jupiter: his curtailment of spring and division of the year into seasons (*Met.* 1.116–18). In the metallic narrative of history in the *Metamorphoses*, I believe, Ovid incorporates that Hesiodic experience of the yearly round, which emphasizes the role of Zeus in the cycle of the seasons. Ovid focuses on the extremes of heat and cold:

*tum primum siccis aer feruoribus ustus
canduit, et uentis glacies adstricta pependit.*

then first the parched air glared white with burning heat, and icicles hung down congealed by freezing winds. (*Metamorphoses* 1.119–20, trans. Miller rev. Goold)

These verses recall Hesiod's introductions of summer (*WD* 414–15: 'When the strength of the sharp sun ceases from its sweaty heat': ἥμος δὴ λήγει μένος ὀξέος ἡλίοιο / καύματος ἰδαλίμου) and winter (*WD* 505–6: 'frosts, which are deadly upon the earth when Boreas blows': πηγάδας, αἶ τ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν / πνεύσαντος Βορέαο δυσηλεγέες τελέθουσιν). It is worth noting that this section of the *Works and Days* was advertised in antiquity as emblematic of 'Hesiod'; in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, the character Hesiod is made to choose the opening of this section as his best verses (*WD* 383–92 on the rising of the Pleiades and the importance of doing everything in season). If Ovid is using this particular theme to evoke the wider outlook of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, it is not surprising to find its didactic expansion at the other end of the poem in Pythagoras' speech (framed by references to the metallic myth).

I submit, then, that the narrative of the races in *Metamorphoses* 1 is employed by Ovid as a 'little *Works and Days*' within his poem. The post-Hesiodic additions in Ovid's 'myth of races' function as telescopes onto what Hesiodic storytelling, both in and beyond this story, has to offer the *Metamorphoses*. Ovidian reference to Hesiod is not only 'window reference'¹⁹¹ through e.g. Plato, Aratus, Lucretius or Virgil, but a magnifying lens, retrospectively highlighting particular aspects of Hesiod's narration for their appropriation in the current poem. Hesiod's didactic poem is

¹⁹¹ See Thomas (1986) 188 on this, the art of looking through one poetic model to another.

important to Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* primarily because its didacticism is based on Hesiod’s readiness to offer multiple mythical aetiologies for the way things are today (cf. *WD* 10: ἐτήτυμα μσθησαίμην). Allusions to the *Works and Days* in *Metamorphoses* 1 serve to evoke and reconstruct Hesiod’s poem as a predecessor for Ovid’s even more multifaceted narrative project,¹⁹² fusing perspectives of past and present, *before* the re-presentation of the universalizing history, in the mouth of Pythagoras in Book 15, recalls the tradition of didactic hexameters going back to Hesiod.

Like Virgil in the *Georgics*, Ovid’s transformation of the metallic myth is a key indication of how his own vision may be considered ‘Hesiodic’, but his answer is, as critics have seen, un-Virgilian. Focusing on this, I turn finally to the question of how the *Metamorphoses* can offer a new vision of the ‘Roman Hesiod’, nuancing the didactic address to farmers in Virgil’s *Ascraeum carmen*. With this goal in view, the combination of references in *Metamorphoses* 1 to all three major Hesiodic poems emerges with a new significance.

5.4 Conclusion: Ovid’s ‘Hesiod’

To highlight the multivocality of ‘Hesiod’ in the *Metamorphoses*, I turn first to the primary scholarly *locus* for the way in which Ovid conceives of ‘Hesiod’ in this poem. Interpretations of the singing competition between the Muses and the Pierides in Book 5 have traditionally presented it as a contest between Hesiodic and ‘Homeric’ voices; Calliope’s song celebrates the power of Ceres, offering a ‘little *Works and Days*’, while the Pierides’ emphasis on divine warfare (*bella . . . superum* 5.319) is argued to recall martial epic (cf. *Iliad* 21).¹⁹³ More recently, Calliope’s song has been shown to be framed by references to the opening of *Theogony* and *Catalogue*, emerging as a ‘full-scale Hesiodic song’ (while Minerva’s contest with Arachne in Book 6 is read as a Romanized

¹⁹² Labate (2010) 150 remarks on the tension in Ovid’s account of the races, noting that ‘every narration could be presented as a cross-roads’; he notes too that Hesiod’s moral-didactic protreptic in the *Works and Days* is at odds with his story of human decline.

¹⁹³ This idea is apparently first in Bilinski (1959) 114.

Contest between Homer and Hesiod, in which Homer-Virgil is set against Ovid-Hesiod).¹⁹⁴

However, Calliope on Ceres also more obviously reworks the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, and the song of the Pierides, as an anarchic revision of the Titanomachy (*Met.* 5.319–31), is itself just as reminiscent of Hesiod's *Theogony* as of Homer's *Iliad*. My broader observation about representations of the 'Hesiodic' in the *Metamorphoses* is to question whether they are necessarily to be seen in rivalry with Homer-Virgil, having always the *Aeneid* in view. In the wake of Virgil's (post-Aranean) blending of Homeric and Hesiodic human histories in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* would be countering Virgil *de rerum natura* just as effectively in combinations or fusions of the two Greek grandfathers of epic as in staging rivalry between them.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, although the conclusion to this chapter remains largely focused on Ovid's contextualization of his races narratives, I frame it in terms of wider generic questions about didactic epic in which Virgil's *Georgics*, in particular, paves the way; these questions will be picked up (differently) in this book's [final chapter](#).

In *Metamorphoses* 1, the evocation of the *Works and Days* in Ovid's 'myth of races' is framed by, and combined with, thematic references to prominent parts of Hesiod's *Theogony* and the *Catalogue of Women*. Beginning from Chaos, but omitting Love from his cosmogony, Ovid signals already that he will not blindly follow Hesiod. Supplanted by later scientific accounts, and by the evocation of the *Works and Days*, theogonic themes re-emerge in the allusive reference to the overthrow of Saturn (1.113), and again by the two brief, foreshortened accounts of the Giants' attempt to conquer the throne of Olympus.¹⁹⁶ The end of the *Catalogue* may then be recalled by Jupiter's decision to obliterate humankind (*Met.* 1.260–1 – cf. *Cat.* fr. 204.98–9 M–W for Zeus's desire 'largely (?) to annihilate the race of speech-endowed human beings', γένος μερόππων ἀνθρώπων / πολλόν ἄϊστωσαι). If the following story of Lycaon, however, indeed reworks themes from

¹⁹⁴ Ziogas (2013) 93–6. ¹⁹⁵ Hardie (2005) 290–1.

¹⁹⁶ *Met.* 1.151–62 in the voice of the narrator, the Giants' grisly death recalling their birth in the *Theogony* from blood shed on the earth, and 182–6 in the voice of Jupiter.

the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, it counters the sense of a steady progression through the works attributed to Hesiod, let alone through human history. In what follows, Ovid's post-diluvian story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, descendants of Prometheus son of Iapetus, brings us back into the territory of the opening of the *Catalogue*.¹⁹⁷ Continuing with Apollo's pursuit of Daphne after his defeat of the Python (*Met.* 1.438–51), Ovid recalls the thematic transition from the martial *Theogony* to the erotic *Catalogue of Women*, a transition repeated in *Metamorphoses* 2.¹⁹⁸

Ovid thus 'cites' the main poems of the Hesiodic corpus in quick succession in the opening book, but his method of reference also contains important indications as to where Ovid's own project is going. The Hesiodic corpus, summarily understood, offers inspiration for a description of the universe *ab origine . . . ad mea tempora*. Yet, in opening the *Metamorphoses* with successive references to *Theogony*, *Works and Days* and *Catalogue*, Ovid breaks the connection of the *Theogony* to its ancient sequel before mending it again. As Ovid then returns us to the themes of the *Theogony* (the Gigantomachy), he repeats in a different vein his evocations of all three Hesiodic works in Book 1.

As my analysis of the races narrative has shown, the Ovidian evocations of episodes from these works are not in watertight compartments; the stories of the races and Pandora, for example, 'bleed' into each other in ways that may be anticipated by earlier 'readings' of the *Works and Days* (see this chapter's introduction, and p. 198 above). With reference to the *Theogony*, too, Ovid's use of the Gigantomachic elements, in particular, points out that the narrative of Hesiod's *Theogony* is not strictly chronological either – rather, like the *Catalogue*, it tracks in turn different parts of the family trees (stemming ultimately from Chasm and Earth) and returns to the origin of the next.¹⁹⁹ My first conclusion, then, is that Ovid's re-presentations of these Hesiodic poems in

¹⁹⁷ Ziogas (2013) 62–6. Scholarly opinion is divided on whether the *Catalogue of Women* narrated the Flood; see e.g. West (1985) 55–6 for a 'no' (re. fr. 204), Hirschberger (2004) 34 n. 89 for a 'yes' (but in a different place). See above n. 96 on potential non-Classical sources for Ovid's Flood.

¹⁹⁸ Ziogas (2013) 66–8.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 71–2 observes that Gaia in *Met.* 2 evokes the agonies of Gaia at both ends of Hesiod's *Theogony*, on whose structure see Most (2006) xxvi–xxxiii. Note too that the

Book 1 draw attention not to a neat chronological progression but to the way in which each of Hesiod's poems, let alone his corpus as a whole, offers plural accounts and perspectives on the world. Ovid signals through reference to Hesiod that his own 'universal mythological history' in the *Metamorphoses* likewise will take a convoluted and multifaceted path.²⁰⁰

My second conclusion is that the reminiscence of the *Works and Days* is not merely a 'digression' on the path from *Theogony* to *Catalogue* in Book 1.²⁰¹ When read with the narratives around it, Ovid's account of human races itself forms not only a stage but a prototype of the universal history Ovid is offering, in that its densely intertextual reading of Hesiod along with conflicting post-Hesiodic traditions effectively juxtaposes and combines several different 'grand narratives' of humankind.

Ovid's treatment of the races myth sheds further light on the retrospective construction of Hesiod in particular as a universal historian, with reference to the question of where to end. Unlike the Homeric poems, the works attributed to Hesiod peter out, whether in assorted instruction (blurring into the 'Days' section of the *Works and Days*) or in tacked-on genealogies (*Theogony*) that allow the 'supplementation' of the *Catalogue*.²⁰² This is refracted in two ways in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. First, by allowing his races narrative in *Metamorphoses* 1 to be supplemented by the creation of offspring from Giants' blood and again by stones from Deucalion and Pyrrha, Ovid points to the problem of defining the conclusion of a history that extends to 'us'. At the other end of the poem, a related issue is brought into focus: how to bring the *performance* of a 'universalizing history' to an end. If Ovid locates the origin of his own programme in the Hesiodic corpus, the *Works and Days* is needed to bring the narrative down to the present, and indeed the use of the races in conjunction with Pythagoras' didactic recasting of the poem's themes in Book 15 recalls this function.

narration of the Prometheus story in the *Theogony* is back to front (Prometheus' punishment is narrated before its cause); cf. Haubold (2005) on the reversed life of Heracles in the *Catalogue*.

²⁰⁰ Wheeler (1999) 194; see *passim* on the narrative course of Ovid's poem. On Hesiod's races as a model of universal history, see first Momigliano (1984).

²⁰¹ *contra* Ziogas (2013) 61. ²⁰² See 1. 2c, with Cingano (2009).

Here, however, Ovid's Pythagoras makes explicit the sense that his instructional panels are tacked on (see e.g. 15.308: *pauca super referam* – 'I'll tell a few more'): his instruction in the nature of things could go on for ever (as he notes at 15.418–20, the day will end before he does), for there is no obvious place to stop. This does not seem to be a feature of didactic poetry taken from Lucretius or even Empedocles, but rather a parody of the way in which the *Works and Days* staggers to a conclusion.²⁰³

This chapter has also argued that Ovid's races narrative exemplifies his presentation of *literary* history, which is as convoluted as his history of the world.²⁰⁴ Through a focus on the power of the narrative lens, Ovid conflates the alternative perspectives within the *Works and Days* with those in its Greek and Roman receptions. His combined allusions to Hesiod, Aratus, Lucretius and Virgil's accounts of the Golden Age, in particular, and his games with the role of the Bronze race in the sequence challenge readers to unravel a chronology of this 'model of the rewriting of myth'.²⁰⁵ As Stephen Wheeler has observed more broadly, there is a tension in the *Metamorphoses* between the narrative modes of history and poetry, chronological order and inversion.²⁰⁶ We may consider this a response to the challenge of Virgil's Hesiodic Silenus in *Eclogue* 6, which, chronologically disordered as it is, has been taken as a 'blueprint' for the *Metamorphoses* as at once a history of the world focused on the loves of the gods, and a history of poetry.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Generally on the interface between Hesiod, didacticism and universal history, see Gale (2005).

²⁰⁴ On Ovid's reshuffling the data of literary history in the *Metamorphoses*, see first Tarrant (2002): e.g. (19) Ovid immediately follows evocations of archaic poetry with those of neoteric material.

²⁰⁵ So Fabre-Serris (1995) 386 views the *Metamorphoses*. Consider too Hunter (2006) 141–2 to conclude a study of Virgil's 'literary genealogy' in *Ecl.* 6: 'did the chronology of Hellenistic poetry matter to Roman poets?' In the case of the *Metamorphoses*, the answer seems to be 'yes and no'; Ovid exploits his knowledge of that chronology but is not concerned to replicate it straightforwardly.

²⁰⁶ Wheeler (2002) 181. Compare Rengakos (2009) 204 on chronological inconsistencies as a feature of the *Theogony*, because of its double character as both descriptive and narrative text.

²⁰⁷ It is notable that the *Eclogue* provides a precedent for Ovid in using the story of the ages to evoke the *Works and Days*. On the poem's disregard for chronology, see Hardie (2005) 288–9.

One may even find the source of this tension in the Hesiodic corpus itself, which on a grand scale presents the emergence of a 'cosmos out of chaos',²⁰⁸ but whose individual threads are harder to follow (cf. n. 199 above), do not easily combine across poems and provoke as many questions as they answer. The 'myth of the races' is one such narrative. Recall in particular the questions provoked in antiquity by the way in which Hesiod inserts himself into the sequence with a dramatic introduction to the age of iron as his own (*Works and Days* 175: 'would that I had died earlier or been born later'). Does Hesiod expect a return of the Golden Age? Do we experience 'time's arrow' or 'time's cycle'?²⁰⁹ While most of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* suggests a linear experience of change, Pythagoras in Book 15 seems to argue for a cycle.

With the races in view, such questions about the organization of time lead to reconsideration of this poem's relation to the *Fasti*. As is well known, the phrase *ad mea tempora* has been taken to reflect the fact that Ovid was composing the *Metamorphoses* in tandem with the *Fasti*, whose first word is *Tempora*; he will take the story of the world down to where the *Fasti* take over.²¹⁰ Hence, we might conclude, Ovid evokes the didactic Hesiod at the end of his poem; conversely, a retrospective, Theogonic 'little Hesiod' kicks off the *Fasti* in the figure of Chaos-Janus. In the case of the *Fasti*, however, it has been shown that as the poem presents it, (man-made) temporal categories are not watertight.²¹¹ Something similar is true of the *Metamorphoses*; if the apotheoses at the end of the poem tease the reader with elements of a return to the Golden Age (see above, 5.3a), its 'history' emerges as circular. Adding this to the scholarship on aspects of Ovid's simultaneous composition of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*,²¹² we may say that the combined appropriation of Hesiod's *Theogony*, *Catalogue* and *Works and Days* signals that Ovid's *tempora* are truly plural.

²⁰⁸ On Hesiod as key to Ovid's shifting from chaos to cosmos and vice versa, see Ziogas (2013) 219.

²⁰⁹ Feeney (2007) 169. For Aratus' response to this conundrum, see Gee (2013) ch. 1.

²¹⁰ First noted by Barchiesi (1991) 6–7. On the calendar's centrality in marking imperial power see Wallace-Hadrill (2005) 58–60 and Feeney (2007), especially ch. 6.

²¹¹ Feeney (2007) 202–6 on the *Fasti*.

²¹² See e.g. Tarrant (2002) 28–9 on Ovid as a poet of rewriting.

The final advantage of highlighting in Ovid’s poem evocations of the *Works and Days* alongside the *Theogony*, and of the ‘I’ which resurfaces in Hesiod’s narrative of races, is the sense of Ovid’s poetic persona, insofar as the history of poetic self-assertions begins with Hesiod.²¹³ I have already noted how Ovid’s assertion of eternal fame, in the *sphragis* to the *Metamorphoses* (15.871–9), may be interpreted as the achievement of a private Golden age (cf. 5.3a above). With Hesiod’s own ‘biography’ in view, his corpus becomes the original model for Ovid’s own in its move to make history personal, to refract the universal through the individual experience. We may see something of this influence already in Empedocles’ harmonization of the cycle of Love and Strife with his own cycle as a fallen daemon; the emphasis is found again (albeit differently) in Callimachus’ dream of poetic initiation in the *Aetia*, in turn imitated by Ennius.²¹⁴ If we have the narrative of ages (*saecula*) in view, the closest of the many models for such a ‘Hesiodic’-Ovidian ‘I’ at the end of the *Metamorphoses* is Ovid’s image of the Sibyl who dwells on her personal history instead of the *saecula* of the Roman world (*Met.* 14.122–53; cf. 15.878). Ovid’s Hesiodic ‘ages’ are not only plural, but personal.

This is not, however, the triumphant end to the didactic use of Hesiod’s races as universal history. The framing of Ovid’s Pythagoras functions as a warning about the likely success of didactic appropriations of the rhetoric of universality. My [final chapter](#) will begin from *Metamorphoses* 15, as an anticipation of the breakdown of speaker-audience relations dramatized in the development of the races theme in Roman drama and satire.

²¹³ Compare the language of Labate (2010) 141 on Ovid as ‘heir’ and ‘perfectionist’ of Hesiod.

²¹⁴ See e.g. Barchiesi (1997) 233 on how Callimachus’ dream of the Muses’ dual revelation (of the material of *Theogony* and *Works and Days*) prefigures the blend of these interests in Ovid’s *Fasti*.

CHAPTER 6

SAECULO PREMIMUR GRAUI: RE-PERFORMING 'HESIOD' IN ROME

6.1 Prologue: Ovid's Pythagoras and the degeneration of didactic

Although the [previous chapter](#) provided new reasons to be interested in Ovid's treatment of the Golden Age in *Metamorphoses* 1, this was not to imply, as some studies have done, that the transformations of this theme in Rome culminate with Ovid.¹ The *Metamorphoses* is neither the end of the reception of Hesiod's myth, nor does it cover all its possibilities. On the first point, the critical emphasis on Augustus as the epicentre of Roman experimentation with 'return of the golden age' ideology has in recent years been nuanced by the rehabilitation of Neronian poetry such as the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus² and Flavian poetry such as Statius' *Silvae* and *Thebaid*.³ The emphasis of this final chapter is on the second point. Seeking to broaden our ideas of Roman responses to Hesiod, I focus on the two most detailed post-Augustan versions of the *locus de saeculo*, the theme of the ages,⁴ to reveal the ways in which, considered in their contexts, they flag problems with the 'Hesiodic' didactic process. One text comes from the *Octavia* (a historical drama attributed to Seneca but probably written after the death of Nero):⁵ the character 'Seneca's' soliloquy on world-ages and his futile address to Nero. The other is the story of Pudicitia's departure from humankind with

¹ This idea surfaces explicitly in the titles of e.g. Kubusch (1986) and Brisson (1992).

² Martin (1996) argues for the novelty of Calpurnius Siculus' vision of an *aurea aetas* under Nero; see also Fabre-Serris (1998) section 2 ch. 1 on Neronian mythology, with attention to Seneca.

³ Franchet d'Espèrey (1997) 187–91 surveys the 'return' theme in Statius and other post-Augustan writers; Gee (2013) ch. 5 treats responses to Aratus in Seneca, Lucan and Statius.

⁴ *de saeculo* is one of four stock rhetorical themes cited by the Elder Seneca, *Contr.* 1. *praef.* 23.

⁵ Until relatively recently, questions of authorship and date dominated study of this play: see Boyle (2008) xiii–xvi for a judicious survey of the debates.

which Juvenal opens his sixth *Satire*, an invective against women. The variously hectoring, prophetic and misogynistic personae of these texts, which I shall assess in turn and then together, enable us to revisit the ways in which a ‘Hesiodic’ speaker develops or loses authority, feels implicated in his prophecies, keeps his immediate audience in mind or is led into tendentious argumentation.

I shall begin by briefly highlighting these issues in relation to Pythagoras in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 15, as the best-known example of a didactic character undermined by his creator. One strand of doubt emerges from the content itself. Pythagoras’ theory of universal change may be seen as a focused expression of the poem’s ethos of metamorphosis, but, as was noted in the [previous chapter](#) (above pp. 233–4), incoherence may be detected in its shifting deployment of metallic *saecula* as a traditional motif. Pythagoras first refers to the traditional periodization of human history (‘that ancient age, to which we have given the name “golden”’, *Met.* 15.96) in support of his exhortation to avoid killing animals, arguing that such natural prosperity is still available to us (15.81–2: ‘the earth, prodigal of her wealth, supplies gentle nourishment’). Later, by contrast, he accepts and appropriates the traditional diachronic opposition between gold and iron in support of his doctrine of universal change (15.259–61: ‘I’d have thought nothing lasts long under the same appearance; thus have you passed from gold to iron, you ages’). Each appropriation of the *topos* of metallic *saecula* undercuts Pythagoras’ authority in the other. With the wider speech in view, too, respect for Pythagoras is limited by the framing exhortation to vegetarianism, a doctrine which ‘rarely failed to elicit ironic responses’ in Ovid’s time.⁶

It is, however, the framing of the whole speech within the story of Numa’s search for wisdom that really raises questions about Pythagoras’ authority and efficacy as a didactic speaker. On the one hand, the reported content of his ‘hyper-didactic’ speech⁷ corresponds to what Numa wants to know; his question about ‘the nature of things’ (15.6: *quae sit rerum natura requirit*) is answered by

⁶ Barchiesi (2001b) 63. See Segal (1969) 281–2 on Athenaeus as witness to the history of such ridicule.

⁷ Barchiesi (2001b) 67, drawing attention to the speech’s didactic features.

Pythagoras' teaching 'the causes of things and their nature' (15.68: *et rerum causas et quid natura docebat*). On the other hand, Pythagoras is addressing a crowd (*in medium discenda dabat coetusque silentum* 66, and at 139 he addresses the 'human race' as a whole) and Numa hears the speech either by accident of proximity (*uir fuit hic* 60) or designedly but at second hand (the syntax allows the possibility that the speech is reported by the old resident of Crotona who first informed Numa about its foundation, 10–59).⁸ In either case, the material in Pythagoras' speech is not designed specifically for Numa in his capacity as a ruler-to-be,⁹ although this is the spirit in which Numa approaches the area ('Fame . . . marks out illustrious Numa for rule . . . he conceives greater matters in his open mind' 15.4, 6). Ovid's use of Pythagoras here, then, simultaneously insinuates in various ways that no such targeted didaxis took place (or chronologically could have done so, as several writers before Ovid had pointed out in critiquing the tradition of their meeting – Pythagoras lived well over a century later than Numa's traditional dates).¹⁰

Further, both the narrator's last-minute warning that Pythagoras' utterance was 'learned certainly, but not also believed' (15.73–4: *non et credita*), and the narrative following the speech, suggest that its teaching was ignored. Despite the length at which Pythagoras' speech is reported, this is not the sum of what Numa bore in mind as he returned home; 'instructed . . . by these and other such words' (479: *talibus atque aliis instructum pectora dictis*). Not only was Numa apparently influenced by other figures such as his wife (the nymph Egeria) and by the Muses (482),¹¹ but in his capacity as king, 'he taught sacrificial rites' (483), which, since they involve

⁸ Cf. Hill (2000) 203 on *Met.* 15.57–60.

⁹ Pace Brisson (1992) 180, its resemblance to 'mirror of princes' literature is in Ovid's text 'accidentally on purpose'.

¹⁰ Barchiesi (2001b) 64 on the 'silent crowd' attending to Pythagoras notes that elsewhere in Latin *silentes* metaphorically means 'the deceased', a category which should include Numa.

¹¹ As e.g. Hardie (1997) 185 and Wheeler (2000) 127 note. In fact, the idea that there *could* be 'other teaching' (*aliis dictis*) in this sense itself tells against Pythagoras as a 'universal' teacher, and the very possibility of relating a universal doctrine has already been put in doubt by Pythagoras' observation that the day will end before he will finish (418–20).

the shedding of blood, are the opposite of what Pythagoras urged.¹² For Ovid's readers, therefore, the framing of the speech calls into question both the degree to which it is tailored to a particular audience and its effect on that audience.

In the scholarship, such observations usually appear within the wider debate about the extent to which Pythagoras' speech is a projection of the *Metamorphoses*, and Pythagoras a figure for the poet.¹³ The broadest context is that of speaker-audience relations throughout the poem, whose storytelling scenes model both ideal and hostile audiences; for the poet's acts of communication, Hesiod's *Works and Days* is acknowledged to be the didactic archetype.¹⁴ Alessandro Barchiesi, in particular, notes that the lack of interaction between Pythagoras and Numa marks a degeneration of the didactic genre: 'The lack of real communication between teacher and student undermines the basis of didactic discourse.'¹⁵ For the purpose of the present chapter, this point deserves more attention.

In the case of Ovid's Pythagoras, the primary 'voices' evoked are undoubtedly post-Hesiodic (see above p. 252). Examining the most detailed post-Ovidian versions of the narrative of human races/ages, however, I shall argue that, when read in their textual contexts, they share a preoccupation with the status and focus of the didactic speaker, the construction of his immediate targets and the didactic effectiveness of a moral doctrine. As I have already argued in previous chapters, experiments with these issues are made possible originally by the intriguing characterization of 'Hesiod' and the ever-shifting status of his addressees, Perses and the kings, in the *Works and Days*. The speakers of the narratives of world ages in the *Octavia* attributed to Seneca and in Juvenal *Satire* 6 may be viewed as new configurations of the authority and helplessness, detachment and involvement that make 'Hesiod' such an arresting figure. While in content these narratives are clearly indebted to

¹² Barchiesi (2001b) 66 emphasizes this apparent 'disobedience'.

¹³ See especially Hardie (in press) on 60–478, Holzberg (2002) 144–6, Segal (2001b).

¹⁴ Wheeler (1999) chs. 3–4.

¹⁵ Barchiesi (2001b) 68, contrasting Aristaeus' respectful obedience to instructions in Virgil *Geo.* 4.

post-Aratean versions of the history of humanity,¹⁶ they function also as ‘trigger texts’ to spot their authors’ wider engagement with the Hesiodic model of didactic interaction.

The *Octavia*, first, will be read as a nightmarish vision of potential outcomes and dangers of the didactic process in the *Works and Days*, centred on the position of the pupil. Closer attention is then paid to ways in which the status of the didactic speaker himself is explored and undercut. I shall suggest that Juvenal *Satire* 6, my central text here, can productively be viewed as a supremely disrespectful reading of the Hesiodic persona. Taken together, the analyses uncover in Roman literature a distinctly experimental and quizzical approach to the relevance of Hesiodic teaching to the modern world,¹⁷ exposing the potential for failure in the didactic process.

In this respect, this chapter forms a dark sequel to my studies of Platonic dialogues (ch. 3), in which Plato’s ascription of narratives of metallic races to different didactic speakers was shown to explore the *constructive* potential of ‘Hesiodic’ pedagogy as a predecessor of ‘philosophy’. The move to dramatize Hesiod’s ethical teaching is found first in the *Protagoras*, *Republic* and *Statesman*. Scholarly labels for the relevant passages – Protagoras’ ‘Great Speech’, Socrates’ ‘Noble Lie’, the Elean Stranger’s ‘Myth of the Reversed Cosmos’ – perhaps indicate the degree to which they are marked in Plato’s text as self-conscious performances. At the same time, as my argument made clear, the interlocutors jostle for authority (Protagoras and Socrates in the *Protagoras*), are self-conscious about their roles as potential masters of truth (Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus in the *Republic*), or are marked in those roles by Plato (the choice of ‘Young Socrates’ as the recipient of teaching in the *Statesman*).¹⁸

If Plato demonstrates how Hesiodic didactic could be developed into philosophical dialogue, Ovid, ps.Seneca and Juvenal expose what it needs to avoid self-destructive collapse into monologue. Already Aratus (on my reading) expresses both hope and

¹⁶ Landolfi (1996) charts in detail the Roman legacy of Aratus’ ‘myth of Δίκη’.

¹⁷ Hunter (2014) 35 identifies this as a thread running through receptions of Hesiod’s *Works and Days*.

¹⁸ Cf. Gordon (2004) on Plato as ‘puppeteer . . . testing various pedagogical techniques’.

uncertainty about whether didactic pronouncements are understood by those who need them. The importance of the Platonic Socrates as a life-model for the historical Seneca needs no argument. The legacy of Plato in Roman satire is less obvious, but it has been pointed out that the now-dominant explanation of the varied voices adopted in the poems (persona theory)¹⁹ was originally expressed in philosophical terms (e.g. Horace as 'the Roman Socrates').²⁰ For an *explicitly* post-Platonic perspective on ethical teaching in Roman satire, an extended example presents itself in *Satire* 4 of Juvenal's Neronian predecessor Persius. This poem features Socrates and Alcibiades in a replay of the ps. Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades* I; Daniel Hooley and others have analysed in detail the ways in which the logic of their discussion on the importance of 'knowing oneself' becomes fractured, and its direction 'wanders off course' until satirist and reader are implicated in his moral.²¹ It has been noted, however, that Juvenal too alludes to Platonic dialogues (e.g. the *Phaedrus* in *Satire* 3) and consideration has been paid to the ways in which he spins satire out of philosophical 'plots' more broadly, particularly in his final book of *Satires*.²²

The present study, then, contributes to this strand of analysis of Roman satire but finds its ultimate inspiration in the complexity of the didactic 'plot' in Hesiod. There is some evidence of contemporary interest in Hesiodic authority, in both Neronian and post-Neronian Rome, beyond the fact that the politicized Golden-Age or renewed-world rhetoric resurfaces under Nero and his successors.²³ Columella, contemporary of Seneca, recalls injunctions from the *Works and Days* at several points in his twelve-book

¹⁹ Anderson (1982) and Plaza (2009) reprint the first application of persona theory to Juvenal: Anderson's 'Anger in Juvenal and Seneca' (1964). Ancient readers did not think in such terms (Clay (1998), Mayer (2003)). Iddeng (2000) challenges persona theory for other reasons.

²⁰ Anderson (1982) 13–49, cited by Keane (2007) 29. To suggest why satirists as well as tragedians look back beyond Aratus, one might, like C. W. Marshall responding to Kragelund (2002) (at 78), draw analogies between the climates of declamation at Rome and the 'performance culture' of democratic Athens (Goldhill and Osborne (1999)) as opposed to 'bookish' Hellenistic culture (on which cf. Bing (1988), Fantuzzi (2004) 17–26; this is qualified by Cameron (1995b) ch. 2).

²¹ See first Hooley (1997) 129–41. ²² Keane (2007).

²³ On the 'restoration panegyric' in Imperial Rome, cf. Ramage (1989), Braund (2009) 12–16 and on Seneca's *De Clem.* 1.19 with cross-references. Evans (2008) 159–63 treats the theme in Florus' *Epitome* (probably written under Hadrian).

De re rustica, even as he also signals debts to more recent experts on farming. In Book 10 he shifts from prose into hexameters, recalling Hesiod's Muses (10.40: *Pierides*), daringly employing the anthropomorphic perspective of the *Theogony* on the earth the farmer must dig and making clear that he has re-envisioned Virgil's *Ascræum carmen* (10.436).²⁴

Just as for the *Octavia*, the retrospective cast of Juvenal's *Satires* means that their dates of publication are still debatable. *Satire* 6 (the whole of Book 2) is most often dated to near the end of Trajan's reign in 118 (its reference to a comet at 6.407 may be that of November 115 CE) but could well have been published under Hadrian, as were the later books of *Satires*. Evidence for a satirical cast on contemporary engagement with Hesiod in the latter period, at least, comes from the extant compilation of the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, which includes in its framing narrative an account of Hadrian's interest in Homer's birthplace and receipt of an absurd answer from the Delphic oracle (*Contest* 3). The following narrative of the poetic contest, in which Hesiod sets Homer riddles and each poet is made to cite his best lines, is startlingly adjudicated by King Panedes in Hesiod's favour despite the popular vote for Homer; it has recently been suggested that even if the tradition of such a contest goes back at least to the Hellenistic period, its official result, in the context of the story about the ruler Hadrian, gains new potential as satire of Hadrian's famously philhellenic ambitions.²⁵

The story of the *Contest*, read thus, suggests a continuing, if cynical, interest in Hesiod in considering how to speak to power,²⁶ a question which in Imperial Rome hangs over the act of looking back to the past. This is just one example of how the myth of the races, especially after its reorientation for praise of Augustus, is unlikely to be an isolated *topos* when found reframed along more 'Hesiodic' (didactic) lines in the *Octavia* and in Juvenal's *Satires*. Rather, I would argue, its force lies precisely in the myth's

²⁴ Henderson (2002) 116–32 is illuminating on the place of Hesiod in the 'shuffle between the authorities and power discourses' found in Columella's treatise.

²⁵ Uden (2010).

²⁶ On this 'Hesiodic' theme in Latin literature, especially in Horace's Roman Odes, see Rosati (2009) 369–72. Hesiod at *Theogony* 80–103 glorifies the power of both kings and poets, but in the *Works and Days* offers more ambiguous images of the poet under pressure.

‘Hesiodic’ baggage of urgent teaching about justice and injustice, power and tyranny. In speaking out against the bygone emperors Nero and Domitian – indeed, the modern discussion of when it would be ‘safe’ to criticize Nero, which has dominated scholarly dating of the *Octavia*, strikingly reflects the logic of the Juvenalian gambit of ‘safely’ directing his ire against the dead (*Satire* 1.170–1) – these texts, I shall argue, use the ‘myth of the races’ to recast various ‘scripts’ emerging from the wider ‘Hesiodic’ corpus, from images of just and unjust cities to stereotypes of women. Given our lack of certainty about their dates, we cannot pin them down as socio-historical criticism,²⁷ but we can identify the *rhetoric* of such criticism and the self-conscious performance of didaxis without prospect of success.

6.2 Didactic hazard A: the pupil in the *Octavia*

6.2a Shades of ‘Hesiod’

After Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the most detailed extant presentation of human history as a series of races occurs in the *Octavia*, the only complete example of the Roman history play known as the *fabula praetexta*.²⁸ The work is set in 62 CE, when Nero divorced Octavia, married Poppaea and ordered Octavia’s execution. According to the *Octavia*, he put down a popular revolt and ordered Octavia to be put to death as its supposed instigator; this partially contradicts the accounts in Tacitus *Annals* 14.60–1 and in Suetonius *Nero* 35.1–2, according to which Nero first charged Octavia with being barren.²⁹ Although, in the play, these events are telescoped into the three days before, during and after the wedding day,³⁰ the longest and most famous scene contributes little to the plot. Act 2 opens with a soliloquy from ‘Seneca’ on the course of humanity in an ageing

²⁷ Braund (1982) 169 and Anderson (1982) 294 emphasize the unreliability of Juvenalian criticism in the ‘happy era of Trajan and Hadrian’.

²⁸ On the meaning, connotations and limitations of this term, see first Manuwald (2001) and Kragelund (2002).

²⁹ For discussion of the divergences see Schmidt (1985) 1.426–30. On the question of chronological priority and the wider relationship between Tacitus and the *Octavia*, see pp. 281–2 below with n. 76.

³⁰ The wedding day itself is largely spliced out. On the play’s construction and symmetries, see first Boyle (2008) lix–lxiv.

cosmos, now nearing destruction (*Oct.* 377–434). As Seneca describes the corruption of the present, Nero enters, his tyrannical behaviour prompting an extended confrontation in which Nero swiftly counters all of Seneca’s moral advice to exercise mercy in his rule. Seneca does not appear again.

Two elements of the likely social and cultural context for this *fabula praetexta* are worth underscoring at this point. Although the didactic function of this genre on a basic level is that of teaching Roman history,³¹ its flourishing in this period can also be viewed in terms of the self-conscious staging of power-relations, the ‘theatricality’ of Neronian Rome and the pervasive sense of imperial ‘script-writing’ reflected in many literary outputs of this period.³² It has been argued, further, that Nero in the *Octavia* reflects a sense of the ‘authoritative scripts’ for empire provided also by *literary* texts such as those of Virgil’s *Aeneid*.³³ This is an interesting idea to bear in mind for this chapter, insofar as we are investigating the aftermath of positive didactic reconstructions of Hesiod, of which Virgil’s *Georgics* is such an influential example.

Let us now examine in detail how the character Seneca in the *Octavia* presents his didactic credentials. Entering alone after a long ode from the citizen chorus about the death of Agrippina, Seneca laments his loss of peace after returning from exile on Corsica (*Oct.* 377–84). Recollections of observing the stars there (385–90) lead to reflection on the state of the *aether*:

*qui si senescit, tantus in caecum chaos
casurus iterum, tunc adest mundo dies
supremus ille, qui premat genus impium
caeli ruina.*

If it is growing old – such a great mass about to collapse
again into blind chaos – then that final day is here
which will crush an impious race with heaven’s fall.

(*Octavia* 391–4, trans. Boyle, adapted)

He anticipates that, after the fall into chaos, the cosmos, renewed, will bear a new progeny (*stirpem nouam* 394), as it did when Saturn ruled

³¹ Highlighted by *ibid.* xliv.

³² Cf. Bartsch (1994), Edwards (1994) 91, Rudich (1997) 1–11, Boyle (1997) ch. 6.

³³ Buckley (2012).

Playing Hesiod: The ‘Myth of the Races’

on earth. That age of men lived peacefully and communally, benefiting from the earth’s spontaneous fertility (400–6).³⁴ It did not last:

*alia sed suboles minus
conspecta mitis. tertium sollers genus
nouas ad artes extitit, sanctum tamen.
mox inquietum quod sequi cursu feras
auderet acres.*

But another, less gentle brood appeared; the third race proved clever in new arts, yet reverent. Then restless, it dared to pursue wild beasts in their course. (*Octavia* 406–10)

After this race, focused on hunting and ploughing (409–15), arrived a ‘more degenerate age’ (*deterior aetas*) that mined metals from the earth, created weapons and kingdoms, and provoked the flight of Astraea (416–24). After this, desire for war and hunger grew, and *luxuria* arose and pervaded all (425–8). The final lines assert the cumulative force of these evils upon the current generation, in a striking flood metaphor:

*collecta uitia per tot aetates diu
in nos redundant. saeculo premimur graui,
quo scelera regnant, saeuit impietas furens,
turpi libido Venere dominatur potens,
luxuria uictrix orbis immensas opes
iam pridem auaris manibus, ut perdat, rapit.*

A gathering wave of vices from many years
Floods over us. We’re crushed by a heavy age,
Where crime reigns, mad impiety rages,
Potent lust lords it with immoral love,
Triumphant excess and its greedy hands
Rape the world’s infinite wealth – to waste it.
(*Octavia* 429–34, trans. Boyle)

The voice evoked by this speech is not purely that of Seneca, the philosopher and dramatist. To be sure, the opening overtones of a Stoic cosmology involving periodic cosmic conflagration are

³⁴ Pythagoras at *Met.* 15.61–5 is introduced as contemplating Nature in an exile voluntarily incurred through hatred of tyranny; for the audience of the *Octavia*, Seneca’s narrative of the primeval era may recall Pythagoras as well as the sequence of races in *Met.* 1, a book often cited by the historical Seneca.

familiar from Senecan drama;³⁵ fire imagery is pervasive in the *Octavia*, culminating at *Oct.* 832–3 with Nero's determination to set fire to his city, in what has been described as a 'localised manifestation' of ἐκπύρωσις.³⁶ The ascription of a periodized account of human history to 'Seneca', however, is remarkable, given that the historical Seneca in *Epistle* 90 expressed doubts about the idea of a distinct primeval era of natural wisdom and virtue.³⁷ In this context, the fact that Seneca in the *Octavia* is not named until Nero ends the exchange (589,³⁸ Seneca is identified at first only obliquely by his reference to exile on Corsica at 382) achieves something beyond dramatic convention.³⁹ It aids a broader recognition of 'Seneca' as a composite voice in the philosophical/didactic tradition, a sense amplified by his re-use of details from throughout the 'cultural tradition' of histories of humanity, especially the accounts of Ovid and Virgil, as well as Senecan plays.⁴⁰ The familiarity of these intertexts, however, may have dissuaded critics from speculation about the function of the passage in the wider text.⁴¹ If we follow up elements of its presentation as a trigger to Hesiod, we can detect more of the 'didactic script' informing both Seneca's soliloquy and his following power-struggle with Nero.

Seneca in the *Octavia* is from the start reluctantly involved in the current situation and affected by his perception of it. The opening protest ('Outrageous Fortune, why did you seduce me / with false smiles and lift me contented / onto this great pinnacle ... ?' *Oct.*

³⁵ Rosenmeyer (1989) 156 discusses such references. ³⁶ Williams (1994) 190–1.

³⁷ Wilson (2003) 85: Seneca is 'one of the few Romans on record as having denied the moral superiority of the Golden Age (*Ep.* 90.44–6) and the very notion of social and moral decline (*Ep.* 97.1–10)'. But the argument in Seneca's *Ep.* 90 is not so simple – see Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof (2013).

³⁸ Indeed, strictly speaking, Nero's allusion to Seneca here ('let me be permitted what Seneca condemns') could just be a scornful reference to the ex-tutor whose works have been quoted throughout the discussion by a disciple. W. S. Smith (2003) 402 observes that Seneca may have left the stage.

³⁹ Pace Ferri (2003) 57–8 on why Octavia, the Nurse and Agrippina too are not named on entering.

⁴⁰ So Boyle (2008) 170. Compare Wilson (2003) 74 on personifications in the play as evidence that the *Octavia* is not to be read 'historically' but is rather about 'transhistorical values'.

⁴¹ E.g. Goldberg (2003) 35: 'The Four Ages remains a discrete topos, an ornament for illustrating the dramatic situation without actually becoming part of it.'

377–9, trans. Boyle) displays the tendency typical of this playwright to end lines with personal or possessive pronouns (*mihi* and *mea* end *Oct.* 377–8).⁴² Seneca is not without thematic predecessors, insofar as the speeches of Octavia, the Nurse and the Chorus in the opening scene all meditate in personal tones on the evils of the present in the context of the past.⁴³ However, what makes this voice 'Hesiodic' is its conjunction with an apocalyptic tone ('The world's last day is here' 392–3) and a periodized account of humanity. Seneca now recalls the young world under Saturn's rule, guided by a pair of ruling goddesses, *Iustitia* and *Fides* (397–8) sent from heaven. As he launches into a 'Golden Age'-style description of the life of the 'new race' at that time, his opening seems in retrospect an inverse of Hesiod's narrative of races, whose final and most memorable stage combines a personal tone (*WD* 174–5), a prophecy of humanity's total destruction (*WD* 180–9, 200–1) and a description of an equivalent pair of virginal divinities leaving mankind to join the immortals (*WD* 197–200); these are now read through the Aratean tradition of departing Justice.

A striking consequence of this framing is that the description reminiscent of the 'Golden Age' is itself the 'second' in the sequence from Seneca's starting-point (note that it is *not* termed 'first'), and the *alia suboles* that appears (*conspecta*) at 406–7 would be the third. This perspective on the sequence removes the awkwardness of understanding the 'less gentle' brood as taking up only a line before the *tertium* . . . *genus* appeared (407–8).⁴⁴ Rather, we should take the following verses in apposition to 406: [this] 'third race proved clever at new arts' (*sollers* . . . / *nouas ad artes extitit* 407–8).⁴⁵ Another debate, concentrating on *mox*

⁴² Such line endings (20 per cent of the play), have been termed 'un-Senecan'/amateur features (so Herington (1961) 26–7) but here they do bring out Seneca's self-focused complaint.

⁴³ As Smith (2003) 406 emphasizes. Indeed, Seneca's close (431: *scelera regnant*) echoes the Nurse's assertion that 'savage Erinyes' has replaced 'holy Piety' as the ruling force in the imperial palace (160–4). Cf. Sutton (1983) 53: 'The premise that the world is both degenerate and god-forsaken is [a] leitmotif of the play.'

⁴⁴ See Boyle (2008) on 406–7 on scholars who therefore posited a lacuna before *tertium* in 407; Ferri (2003) on these lines denies such a probability on the grounds of Ovid's similarly brief description of the third race. In Ovid, however, metallic identifiers leave no doubts about the change from Bronze to Iron.

⁴⁵ Compare the syntax of 'another race, a third/fourth' in Hesiod's account (*WD* 143, 157).

inquietum in the next line (409), concerns whether Seneca there introduces a fourth race or merely marks a transition within the third.⁴⁶ My own preference is for a transition, but one that looks ahead to the *end* of the description (412–15); certainly the *Georgics*-style description immediately following, of hunting, fishing and trapping birds (*Oct.* 409–13; cf. *Geo.* 1.139–42), can easily be read as expanding the assertion at 407–8 of the third race's inventiveness, whereas the presentation of (unnecessarily) ploughing the earth 'formerly free from wound' (*uulnere immunem prius* 413) implies a more 'restless' turn; this is the act that prompts the earth to conceal her crops (414–15). Moreover, new races in the middle of Seneca's sequence are more clearly marked by *sed* (406 and 416), and while *sanctum tamen* in 408 may well be a teasing echo of the *non scelerata tamen* which divides Ovid's Bronze race from that of Iron (*Met.* 1.127), equally the following *mox* echoes the use of *mox* and *tum* to mark stages within Ovid's Golden and Silver races (including the transition to sowing seeds, *Met.* 1.123–4). Beyond this, the 'offence' against mother earth (*Oct.* 414 *laesa*) parallels the transition into ὕβρις taking place *within* the first post-Golden stage according to Hesiod (*WD* 132–7 on the short-lived Silver adults).

The 'worse age' which follows is the first to mention war, and contains many reminiscences of the Ovidian Iron Age, but also seems to be structured in several stages, as in Hesiod. Astraea leaves (422) but her departure is no longer the climax of degeneration (perhaps following up this point in Ovid: see p. 251 above). Hunger of all kinds now spreads through the whole world, and the worst evil, *luxuria*, springs up like a new human race (*maximum exortum est malum* 426), and gains force simply from time and folly (427–8). At this point, Seneca shifts into the present tense, with emphatic first-person plurals that demand the attention of the external audience: *collecta uitia ... / in nos redundant; saeculo premimur graui* (429–30). It is not clear whether this is to be taken as a new *saeculum*, or whether Seneca places his own

⁴⁶ Boyle (2008) on this line argues that the *tamen* preceding *mox inquietum* echoes the close of Ovid's third race, so *mox* signals its replacement by a fourth race. Ferri (2003) *ad loc.* sees rather a progression within the *tertium genus*, from being exploitative yet still reverent (408), to *inquietum*.

lifetime within the *deterior aetas* previously mentioned. Seneca's helpless discontent with his place in a world ruled by *impietas*, *libido* and avarice (431–4)⁴⁷ works as a climax of his narrative, and in this context seals a recollection of the Hesiodic speaker who struggles with his place among the men of Iron (*WD* 174–5).⁴⁸ We have come full circle.

In support of this 'Hesiodic' reading, it is worth noting that there is little of the despairing tone in the narratives of civilization in the *Metamorphoses* or *De rerum natura*. Post-Hesiodic didactic poetry on the whole conveys the sense that the speaker of a narrative of human history is a teacher who can rectify the predicament of his addressee precisely because he does not share his unhappy state of ignorance.⁴⁹ Lucretius *DRN* 2.1–19, for example, memorably emphasizes the detachment and superiority of a didactic speaker who has already achieved internal peace; he urges resignation to the inevitable physical dissolution of the world (especially in *DRN* 5 and 6). In Virgil's *Georgics*, too, the narrator is usually characterized as a self-consciously advanced 'good advisor'.⁵⁰ Occasionally, however, the Virgilian didactic voice *does* become personally involved, as when presenting the omens of civil war and urgently pleading peace (*Geo.* 1.451 *uidemus*, 1.497 *nobis*).⁵¹ Seneca in the *Octavia* writes this tone back into the narrative of human history whose rewriting (*Geo.* 1.121–59) helped to mark Virgil's didactic poem as a 'Hesiodic song'.

At this point in Seneca's speech, Nero enters 'with a grim expression' (*Oct.* 436: *truci . . . uultu*). The timing clearly suggests to the spectators that he represents the culmination of Seneca's

⁴⁷ Boyle (2008) on these lines notes the ironies of the audience's knowledge of the historical Seneca's conviction for adultery and his acquisition of great wealth.

⁴⁸ Latin imitations of this Hesiodic voice include Horace *Sat.* 2.2.92–3 and the disgruntled Umbricius in Juvenal *Sat.* 3.41 ('What should I do at Rome?').

⁴⁹ Aratus' emphasis on self-evident truths available equally to everyone is something of an exception – see the essays in Schiesaro *et al.* (1993).

⁵⁰ Conspicuous examples are *Geo.* 1.176–7, 2.35–46, 3.291–3, but the frequency of imperatives, gerundives and expressions such as *docebo* or *edico* keep the instructive role of the narrator in mind.

⁵¹ On this 'apocalypse', cf. Lyne (1974) and Mynors (1990) on 1.448 discussing the rare use of exclamations 'to break through the unemotional detachment proper to [Virgil's] assumed role of "didactic" poet'.

narrative of human decline.⁵² Nero's immediate order to execute his relatives Plautus and Sulla prompts an extended confrontation with Seneca, who unsuccessfully tries to advise him (472–587) in terms borrowed from the Senecan treatise *De clementia*, addressed to Nero in the early years of his reign, offering a 'mirror of kingship' with reference to the later career of Augustus.⁵³ Seneca's 'shift of roles' here, from 'philosophical speculation on the course of universal history' to 'mentor and blocking figure'⁵⁴ has prompted critical debate about the level of authority he has in the play. In opening the scene, he cuts a more impressive figure than the anonymous attendant of Atreus in Seneca's *Thyestes*, but he does not appear again, and his advice that Nero should cherish Octavia merely provokes Nero's defiant decision to marry Poppaea immediately.⁵⁵ It is here that the initial parallel between Seneca and the Hesiodic speaker enables us again to move the critical debate forward and to identify the function of Seneca's soliloquy within the play.

The parallel reveals, first, that Seneca, like Hesiod, is *both* a helpless individual *and* a voice of authority. Hesiod's self-presentation fluctuates in confidence between the assertions of the prologue, the despairing account of the Iron present (*WD* 174–5, 270–3), the role as 'good advisor' (starting at 293) and the reminder of his victory at Aulis because of the Muses (656–7, 662). These tones are connected, insofar as the speaker's dissatisfaction with the behaviour of those around him provides the dramatic occasion for the extended address to Perses and the kings about the position and role of mortals in the world. The memory of this wider context in Hesiod helps to link Seneca's monologue to the ensuing dialogue with Nero, for Seneca's 'shift of roles' bears more than a passing resemblance to the parallel change of discursive modes in *Works and Days* 174–285. In each

⁵² Cf. Williams (1994) 182. Boyle (2005) 226 finds this 'unsubtle dramatic timing'; similarly Goldberg (2003) 34. Octavia already used the word *truces* first of Agrippina but then several times in association with Nero – cf. *Oct.* 22, 87, 109, with Sutton (1983) 34–5 on 'overworked words' in the play.

⁵³ On the *Octavia*'s use of *De clementia*, see first Manuwald (2002).

⁵⁴ Smith (2003) 402.

⁵⁵ See Manuwald (2003) 48 and Poe (1989) 450–2 on the parallel with *Thyestes*. Harrison (2003) 121–2 describes Seneca's opposition to Nero as 'half-hearted'; Williams (1994) 180, 187, and Goldberg (2003) 24–5 similarly argue that the play mocks Seneca's authority. Supporting Seneca are Smith (2003) 402, Fitch (2004), cited in Boyle (2008) lxviii.

text, the speaker moves from recounting a multi-stage narrative of human history to a more oblique approach to rulers (we think of the coded tale of the hawk and nightingale directed to the kings at *WD* 202), and exhortations to follow the path of justice.

To an extent, of course, *any* discussion of monarchy and justice after the *Works and Days* and *Theogony* might be called ‘Hesiodic’, but it is worth noting that Seneca’s admonitions to Nero in the *Octavia* include sentiments particularly reminiscent of lines in the *Works and Days*, even if they were so popular as to travel independently. Like Hesiod, Seneca reminds his tyrant audience that the gods are watching (*Oct.* 448 – cf. *WD* 249–62), and advice such as ‘this is virtue’s peak, the path to heaven’ (*Oct.* 476: *haec summa uirtus, petitur hac caelum uia*) renews in the Roman context of imperial apotheoses the ‘steep path to virtue’ metaphor of *WD* 289–92, repeatedly cited and re-interpreted by later philosophical writers, not least Plato and Aratus.⁵⁶

Within the *Octavia*, I suggest, the force of such recollections of Hesiodic didactic ultimately lies not in comparison but in contrast. A closer look at Seneca’s scene reveals that echoes of the *Works and Days* serve to emphasize by contrast the gravity of the situation in the *Octavia*, in which Seneca’s opposition to Nero has no effect on the course of events. Nero easily counters Seneca’s advice to emulate the mature Augustus by pointing out the violence of Augustus’ early rule. Seneca thereafter disappears, and in Nero’s later conversation with his Prefect at *Oct.* 820–76, structurally parallel to the earlier scene,⁵⁷ the tyrant has little difficulty in overcoming opposition to his determination to kill Octavia. It is in this context that the dramatic contribution of Seneca’s soliloquy becomes clear.

6.2b *The bleak future of didactic*

Even if Seneca’s story of human races (which becomes a story of ages)⁵⁸ in its framing and tone recalls memorable voices from

⁵⁶ On its reception, see first Koning (2010) 144–7.

⁵⁷ Nero’s refrain, *imperata perage* (874), inverts his first words after Seneca’s monologue (437).

⁵⁸ The terms are, in order: *genus*, *stirp[s]*, *genus*, *suboles*, *genus*, *aetas*, *saecul[um]*, a progression which raises the question of the relationship between a birth and an era, as appropriate for Nero as for Augustus. See below, and above 1.3a.

Hesiod, one might think that its status as a soliloquy renders irrelevant the question of its didactic success or failure. Answering this challenge demonstrates precisely what can be gained from viewing the *Octavia* as a response to the Hesiodic 'script'.

Having observed that Seneca's move from soliloquizing to counselling presents a dramatic analogy to the speaker's shift of modes in the *Works and Days*, I now argue that Seneca's initial story of humanity recalls ways in which Hesiod's 'myth of the races' is deployed in his *Works and Days* for the benefit of his dual addressees, Perses and the kings. As was emphasized in [chapter 2](#), there are several ways in which Hesiod makes clear that the narrative in metallic terms applies to the 'real' world in the background of the poem. Emphases on fraternal discord and corrupt legal activity in the account of the Iron Age, and verbal echoes of the races in the present-tense portraits of Just and Unjust cities, help to convey that this diachronic story mythically expresses the current choice between δίκη and ὕβρις open to Perses and the kings, whose behaviour affects the whole community. Re-examination of Seneca's monologue in this light reveals that, although it is not explicitly directed at any character in the *Octavia*, he too tailors his story of the Races/Ages as if to a target – Nero.

As noted above, Seneca's bitter reflections on life in Nero's palace are preceded in the play by those of Octavia, the Nurse and the Chorus. Their accounts of recent imperial history are recalled also by his description of the different ages of the world. Most notably, he personifies the earth as mother: first a 'happy parent' (*Oct.* 405: *felix parens*), at the onset of ploughing she buries her fruits in her 'holy womb' (415: *sacro sinu*) but is further 'wounded' by her degenerate children (416–17: *in parentis uiscera intrauit suae / deterior aetas*). This language resonates with the chorus' preceding description of the stabbing of Agrippina on Nero's orders (366–72).⁵⁹ Spoken to Nero, such details might well be strategic emphases to make him listen. As it is, Nero's entrance just *after* the myth poignantly highlights the fact that Seneca is not able to say this to his face.

⁵⁹ As Williams (1994) 181 and Giancotti (1981) 88–90 note.

Several features of the following exchange between Seneca and Nero combine to suggest that this was not always the case; that the narrative of human races is 'Hesiodic' advice addressed to Nero in happier times. One stylistic clue is found in the quantity of *stichomythia* and even *antilabē* (shared lines) in the confrontation (440–61, 578–85), which suggests that these two speakers have a long history of interaction.⁶⁰ A more specific reminder of their past didactic relationship is their shared reference to the *De clementia*. Seneca, in his first extended speech to Nero, tries to say, as he wrote in the *De clementia*, that Nero has the rare advantage of having succeeded to the throne without bloodshed.⁶¹ The words now ring hollow, since Nero's first action on entering was to demand the severed heads of Plautus and Sulla (437–8), so enacting a larger-than-life image of tyranny.⁶² Likewise, Seneca's exaltation of the idea of giving 'peace to one's era' (*Oct.* 475: *saeculo pacem suo*) picks up, now without conviction, his association between Nero and a renewed Golden Age in the *De clementia* (2.1.4). Nero counters Seneca's representation of the reign of Augustus (*Oct.* 477–81), drawn from the *De clementia*, with reference to the violence of Augustus' early career (*Oct.* 504–29), which Seneca had admitted in that context (*Clem.* 1.1.1).⁶³

In other words, Nero acknowledges and implicitly threatens to upstage Seneca as a didactic voice.⁶⁴ This could be viewed as an expression of the inevitable aftermath of *any* didactic process, insofar as the teacher is rendered redundant once the pupil has learnt.⁶⁵ A more pointed capping of past advice from Seneca may,

⁶⁰ Cf. Smith (2003) 402, although his emphasis is on Seneca's right to free speech.

⁶¹ *tibi numen incruenta summisit suum* (*Oct.* 482); cf. *praestitisti, Caesar, ciuitatem incruentam* (*Clem.* 1.1.1.3). Likewise, he describes Nero as 'judge of the human race' (488) picking up *Clem.* 1.1.2, in which Nero was envisaged as solemnly realizing the import of this responsibility.

⁶² On Nero as the 'self-inventing tyrant', cf. Henderson (1989) 191 and Bartsch (1994) *passim*.

⁶³ Fitch (2004) 507 notes that the transfer of such observations to Nero makes him appear more practical while Seneca now looks hopelessly idealistic.

⁶⁴ Smith (2003) 411–12 comments: 'Nero has learnt a lot from his teacher' and 'Nero knows his Seneca'. Cf. Wilson (2003) 85.

⁶⁵ Keane (2006) 107 demonstrates in the *Satires* of Horace, Persius and Juvenal the idea that students do not remain passive listeners, but evolve and begin to objectify and displace their teacher. On Persius' implicit response to models of teacher-pupil hierarchy, see also Henderson (1991).

however, be detected here. When Nero responds to Seneca's example of Augustus by citing the violence of his early rule, he takes over not only the *De clementia* as a didactic script, but also the tradition of the 'myth of races' as a didactic tool. For his alternative history of the Augustan era (492–529) is divided into periods, like those of Seneca, Ovid and Hesiod – (*tunc* 503, *nec finis hic . . . stetit* 514, *tandem* 524). Nero's account replays other aspects of Seneca's opening soliloquy – there mother earth was *laesa* (414); here, Rome is *lacerata* (504). Like Seneca and Hesiod, Nero concludes with the way that his tale applies to himself: stars await 'us too' (*nos quoque* 530). With this account, Nero effectively undertakes to replace Seneca in Hesiodic mode.

Indeed, Nero here and elsewhere makes a wider challenge to the very ethos of Hesiodic didactic – the possibility of a choice of lives. In his exchange with Nero, Seneca can be viewed as trying the Hesiodic strategy of emphasizing the choice open to his listener. Nero is being urged to fulfil Seneca's dream, by realizing, with his reign, a *saeculum* which surpasses even that of Augustus in negating 'Iron Age' elements: 'Sour envy's gone, conquered by consensus / And duty' (*Oct.* 485–6: *invidia tristis, uicta consensus pio / cessit*; cf. *WD* 192–3 on αἰδώς and 195–6 on ζῆλος). Seneca tries to speak as if Nero has his *saeculum* ahead of him, to make of it what he will (*Oct.* 490–1: 'Protect this title, / Rome begs, and entrusts her people to you'). It could be a renewed Golden Age.⁶⁶

The effect of Nero's account, in its context as a response to Seneca, is to undercut the idea of a choice and to parody the didactic importance of the myth of ages. What Nero suggests is that it is all just a question of perspective. This is why he pointedly 'corrects' Seneca's view of Augustus' reign by referring to the same text as that from which Seneca drew his examples, and selecting others (mainly from *Clem.* 1.11). Later in the play, where Nero does make a 'choice', it is in a context which both ironically recalls the images of the two communities presented to Perses in the *Works and Days*, and turns on its head the audience's

⁶⁶ Insofar as this view is manifestly false, Seneca is as unconvincing an authority as is Poppaea's nurse at 740–55. Seneca's 'demotion' to Nurse, noted by Harrison (2003) 121, is signalled as soon as he gives Nero the same advice about love/lust that Octavia's nurse gave to Octavia in the opening scene.

perspective of Nero's own era, gleaned from his callous behaviour during the play. His decision to fire his city, bringing down on the people 'shameful want, savage hunger, and tears' (*Oct.* 833: *turpis . . . egestas, saeua cum luctu fames*), makes literal not only Stoic notions of conflagration, but also the horrors of Hesiod's Unjust city (*WD* 242–5 on woe, famine and pestilence; Nero's power as an individual recalls the preceding emphasis here (240–1) that 'often even a whole city suffers, when one man sins and devises presumptuous deeds'). The irony is, however, that Nero believes in the contemporary rhetoric about his *saeculum* as 'golden'; he reflects bitterly on the popular uprising in support of Octavia:

*exultat ingens saeculi nostri bonis
corrupta turba, nec capit clementiam
ingrata nostram, ferre nec pacem potest.*

The revelling masses are spoilt by the blessings
of our age. These ingrates do not accept
My clemency and cannot endure peace.

(*Octavia* 834–6, trans. Boyle)

With such a misplaced vision of his reign so far, his decision to punish his citizens is *not*, after all, a real change of direction such that those around him will notice the difference.⁶⁷

To the extent that recollections of the *Works and Days* serve to underline how much more dangerous is the situation in *Octavia*, the play presents a sequel to the Hesiodic script. It emphasizes the darker possibilities in the relationship between a Hesiodic speaker and his addressees. Revealed in Nero is the unwanted result – a Perses who took the wrong path, who continued keeping bad company and was transformed from a follower of local tyrannical magistrates into a tyrant himself.⁶⁸ Although Seneca says that adolescents need his advice (446: *regenda magis est feruida adulescentia*), Nero thinks that he is old enough to guide himself

⁶⁷ Compare Seneca's Hippolytus deluded about his 'primeval' values (*Phaedra* 483–544, below p. 302).

⁶⁸ Compare above sect. 3.3c.iii on Glaucon and Adeimantus as potential tyrants. Other texts involving potential rulers as addressees of metallic narratives include Pythagoras' speech heard by Numa, and Evander's speech in Virgil *Aeneid* 8.314–27. On the difficulties of addressing Augustus, with Perses as the original didactic addressee in mind, cf. Barchiesi (2001c) 102.

(447: *aetate in hac satis esse consilii reor*); in retrospect, the direction of Hesiod's αἴνος to 'kings who themselves know' could indeed anticipate such a hostile response. The *Octavia*'s initial isolation of Seneca paves the way for this rejection, raising the question of whether it is possible in Neronian Rome to reprimand unjust rulers at all,⁶⁹ let alone to combine in one speech, as did Hesiod, advice towards powerful audiences and private individuals, in different discursive modes.⁷⁰ In the *Octavia*, the shift of discourses is replayed as a retreat from confrontation.

Even before Nero negates the idea of choice, then, Seneca's soliloquy and the brief exchange about the need for guidance powerfully highlight the fact that the success of didaxis depends on the addressee's cooperation in his or her instruction, if not actively, at least by (what is constructed to be) silent consent. In Hesiod, the 'myth of the races' constructs a willing audience in its introduction: 'if you like, I'll recapitulate another story' (ἐἰ δ' ἐθέλεις *WD* 106, trans. Most). Even if this is really a rhetorical move demonstrating the ability of the speaker (cf. Protagoras, pp. 99–102 above), Nero's response to Seneca turns this, like the 'knowledgeable kings' of the αἴνος, into an opportunity for dissent.⁷¹ Hesiod's Perses has been described, albeit tendentiously, as a figure who 'always fails';⁷² the *Octavia*'s depiction of Nero makes the terrifying experiment of imagining an addressee who, although a negative example for the external audience, always succeeds in debate.

It is worth noting that a similar tussle over the script has been detected in Tacitus' account of Nero's reign. Against a view of Tacitus' Nero as controlling the public script,⁷³ it has been argued

⁶⁹ On the figured speech required for contemporary criticism, cf. Ahl (1984b); on the multiple aims and audiences of *De clementia*, cf. Griffin (1976) ch. 4, Rudich (1997) 44–50, 255 on 'polytelic' writing.

⁷⁰ Cf. Schmidt (1986) 40 on how Hesiod employs 'indirection' in the fable and the allegory of Δίκη, although Clay (1993) 27 n. 12 points out that it ends in violent threats (*WD* 265–9).

⁷¹ Plato *Republic* empowered the addressees – Adeimantus and Glaucon laid down the conditions of Socrates' arguing for justice – but even Thrasymachus (*Rep.* 351c) was more constructive than Nero.

⁷² Hunt (1981) 34: 'he functions in the poem as the butt of Hesiod's railery'.

⁷³ Bartsch (1994) 22.

that the *Annals* present a Nero ‘ghostwritten’ by Seneca, beginning with the words for Nero’s first public speeches (*Annals* 13.3), and that Tacitus implies through his own allusive literary texture that Nero has no new voice of his own; even as Nero surpasses Seneca in their confrontation in Book 14, he acknowledges Seneca as the source of his eloquence (14.55.1).⁷⁴ Indeed, we see Seneca writing parts for Nero already within his *De clementia*.⁷⁵ But the presentation of self-conscious scriptwriting may be a further element of the tension detected between Tacitus’ account and that of the *Octavia*.⁷⁶ In the *Octavia*, through allusions to the *De clementia*, the *Aeneid* and even, it has been argued, to Lucan’s Caesar in the *Civil War*, we see Nero ‘dismantling various literary and ideological scripts on which past imperial identity has been authorised’.⁷⁷

The effect is achieved in part through the *Octavia*’s focus on three days in 62 CE, a year which Tacitus regards as a turning point in Nero’s reign. This is the year in which Seneca’s influence over Nero sharply declined, following the death of his fellow-mentor Burrus (*Annals* 14.52–7). The play dramatizes a critical moment in the relationship of Seneca and Nero – Seneca’s final chance to speak out – and echoes of the context of the ‘myth of the races’ in the *Works and Days* bring home how much more powerless is Seneca to change the nature of Nero’s rule than Hesiod addressing Perses before it is too late. Critics who would read the *Octavia* as an apology for Seneca (cf. n. 55 above), anticipating Dio’s characterization of him as τυραννοδιδάσκαλος (‘teacher of tyrants’, 61.10.2), might then argue that through the demonstration of what happens to ethical didaxis in Neronian Rome, Hesiod is coopted in Seneca’s defence. Only in retrospect, in the *Moral Epistles*, written after Seneca’s fall from favour, does Seneca have the space to rewrite the script of his education of Nero.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ O’Gorman (2000) 144–55. ⁷⁵ See Braund (2009) 53–7 on Seneca’s aims here.

⁷⁶ Taylor (2010) reviews the debate and concludes that Tacitus records what the *Octavia* enacts. However, Kragelund (2000) contrasts their perspectives on Nero’s *luxuria*. Billot (2003) argues that Tacitus pointedly responds to the *Octavia* by changing the story slightly in every respect.

⁷⁷ Buckley (2012).

⁷⁸ Too (1994) persuasively discusses Seneca’s treatment of Lucilius and the tendency of the *Epistulae* to replace epistolary dialogue with internal conversation.

6.3 Didactic hazard B: the speaker in Juvenal *Satire* 6

As a belated protest against crime, the voice of Seneca in the *Octavia* exposes the potential for unwanted results in Hesiodic didaxis. The play does not suggest, however, that there was anything inherently wrong with Seneca's teaching, simply that it is no use to reapply his ideas of ideal kingship to a pupil who has internalized only too knowingly the models previously given. However weak Seneca may seem by the side of Nero, there is no doubt that it is he who gains the sympathies of the play's audience.

Among the poems of Juvenal, however, there is another, equally urgent monologue beginning with a story of world ages, which also evidently fails to persuade its addressee, and in this case, sympathy for the speaker is difficult to maintain. Echoes of the *Works and Days* in *Satire* 6 encourage detailed consideration of what happens to the Hesiodic 'didactic plot', such as it is, in Juvenal's poem. I argue that Juvenal offers instead a 'satiric plot', constructed as a failure of didactic in action, caused not by the pupil's perversity, but by the speaker's loss of focus. I shall further suggest that the combination in *Satire* 6 of a metallic races narrative and a catalogue of female examples of lust and *luxuria* retrospectively constructs Hesiod, 'poet of women', as the satirist's predecessor and as a misogynist – a move perhaps already made in archaic Greek poetry, but not with Hesiod's races in view. Comparison with the polarized images of women in the *Octavia* will then reveal the extent to which divergent ideas of women, deriving ultimately from Hesiod, could be exaggerated and mobilized by those reflecting on the dynasties of Imperial Rome.

Consideration of Juvenal in terms of 're-performance' of Hesiodic poetry brings together two key aspects of our understanding of Roman satire in general and of Juvenal in particular. The first is that of the satirist's own performance. Rapid shifts of discursive mode observed in Horace, Persius and Juvenal have been analysed not only in terms of rhetorical personae, but also of 'face',⁷⁹ power and impotence,⁸⁰ and the pervasive role-playing

⁷⁹ On the changing 'face' of Horace in the *Epodes* and beyond, see Oliensis (1998).

⁸⁰ Cf. Fitzgerald (1988) on the *Epodes*.

endemic to Imperial society, which Seneca puts in Stoic terms; ‘apart from the Stoic wise man, we all play multiform roles’ (*Ep.* 120.22: *multiformes sumus*).⁸¹ For Juvenal in particular, influenced by declamation,⁸² the theatrical element has been found important both as a theme and as a mode (cf. *Satire* 1.1: ‘Shall I always be only in the audience?’).⁸³ I shall argue that Juvenal’s take on the ‘myth of the races’ in *Satire* 6 anticipates modern criticism of Hesiodic didaxis, some of which relates the illogicalities of the *Works and Days* specifically to the poem’s composition for performance.⁸⁴ Second, this chapter offers a new take on the idea, often reformulated, that hexameters of satire both appropriate and define themselves against epic, whether considered a straw-man of ‘essential’ epic or a totalizing, world-ordering history of Rome.⁸⁵ Bearing in mind the various ways in which Hesiod is positioned in relation to Homer in their ancient receptions, I shall suggest that a caricature of *Hesiodic* epic, based on a malicious construction of ‘Hesiod’s’ attitude to women, is likewise exploited in Juvenal’s self-defining project.

6.3a *The demise of the addressee*

For Juvenal, the actions of his contemporaries are such that ‘it is difficult *not* to write satire’ (*Sat.* 1.30: *difficile est saturam non scribere*). Several critics have noted that Juvenal may be seen as a new Hesiod, stung into action by present-day crime.⁸⁶ ‘when was the supply of vices more plentiful?’ (*quando uberior uitiorum copia?* 1.87). Humanity is at a tipping point: ‘all depravity stands on the precipice’ (*omne in praecipiti uitium stetit* 1.149). In several satires, Juvenal invokes the idea of a lost primeval, simpler and

⁸¹ Cf. Jones (2001) 126, and also Rosenmeyer (1989) 37–56, especially 50, although much of his discussion focuses on the Stoic preoccupation with the dramatic, which is a rather different thing.

⁸² For an overview of Juvenal’s use of topics and styles of declamation, see Braund (1997).

⁸³ See e.g. Keane (2003). ⁸⁴ Scodel (2012).

⁸⁵ The former formulation in Jones (2007) ch. 5; the latter in Connors (2005); cf. Gale (2004b), L. Morgan (2004) (satire as the ‘evil twin’ of epic), Freudenburg (2005) and Winkler (1989).

⁸⁶ Winkler (1989) 441 explicitly compares their perspectives on moral decline.

moral age, as if to sharpen this perspective on the present.⁸⁷ At least once, he uses metallic terms. In *Satire* 13, a mock *consolatio* addressed to Calvinus for the loss of a loan, the tradition of metallic races is cited as an outdated or inadequate description of the current climate of crime:

*nona aetas agitur peioraque saecula ferri
temporibus, quorum scelerei non inuenit ipsa
nomen et a nullo posuit natura metallo.*

We are living in the ninth age,⁸⁸ an era worse than the age of iron. Nature herself can find no name for its wickedness and has no metal to label it. (*Satire* 13.28–30, trans. Braund)

Like 'Seneca' in the *Octavia* and 'Hesiod' in the *Works and Days*, the speaker in Juvenal here places himself and his audience in the sequence of ages, on this occasion to emphasize the belatedness of his didactic urgency.⁸⁹ His subsequent discourse on the primeval divine scene above and below earth, and the contrast with the extent of human crime today, parodies other elements of the 'Golden Age' story as told by various authors from Hesiod to Ovid.⁹⁰

The closest evocation of the *Works and Days* as a performance of urgent advice, I shall argue, occurs in *Satire* 6, and is flagged by a detailed rewriting of the metallic myth:

*credo Pudicitiam Saturno rege moratam
in terris uisamque diu, cum frigida paruas
praeberet spelunca domos.*

I can believe that Chastity lingered on earth during Saturn's reign and that she was visible for a long time during the era when a chilly cave provided a tiny home. (*Satire* 6.1–3, trans. Braund)

⁸⁷ Jones (2007) 69 cites 3.12 [*sic*: 3.312–4?]; 5.57ff; 6.1ff; 287ff; 11.78ff; 13.38ff. to show the Golden Age is repeatedly subjected to 'levity . . . as though the past is like the present, albeit harsher to live in'.

⁸⁸ On the sibylline resonances of this phrase, see Courtney (1980) on line 28.

⁸⁹ On the self-conscious belatedness of Juvenal's satire, see Freudenburg (2001) ch. 3.

⁹⁰ E.g. the Underworld ghosts used to live cheerfully without rulers (*Sat.* 13.52; cf. Ovid *Met.* 1.89–93 on the Golden Age). The parallelism of Iron and Golden Age descriptions, evident already in Hesiod (pp. 65–6 above), is taken further here: *Sat.* 13.64–5: 'If I see an outstanding, honest man, I rank this prodigy with a mutant baby' reverses the astonishment that the speaker claims was felt by the primitive age on beholding wickedness (*improbis illo fuit admirabilis aeuo* 53).

After a description of the unkempt simplicity of this primeval era,⁹¹ Juvenal maps the gradual departure of Pudicitia along with Astraea onto the ages of Silver and Iron ruled by Jupiter. This story is then revealed to be part of a warning to Postumus to find a way out of his forthcoming marriage:

*omne aliud crimen mox ferrea protulit aetas:
uiderunt primos argentea saecula moechos.
conuentum tamen et pactum et sponsalia nostra
tempestate paras?*

Every other kind of crime came later, products of the iron age. It was the silver centuries that saw the first adulterers. And yet, in our day and age, are you preparing an agreement and contract and wedding vows? (*Satire* 6.23–6, trans. Braund)

Initially matter-of-fact about the history of adultery ('it's an ancient and established practice, Postumus, to pound someone else's bed': *anticum et uetus est alienum*, *Postume, lectum / concutere* 21–2), and focused on helping Postumus find a way out (*exitus* 33), the speaker is increasingly drawn into the husband's plight. He is not above imagining himself married (167–9) and addressing the female enemy (192–9). Thereafter, his extended invective against female power becomes increasingly urgent, ending with warning *exempla* of wicked women both from history and from the myths of tragedy (655–61).

The account of Pudicitia's departure, first, seems to cast an Ovidian lens on the Hesiodic/Aratean account of the metallic races. By stating that traces of Pudicitia remained on earth only 'while Jupiter was not yet bearded' (*Sat.* 6.15–16: *Ioue nondum / barbato*), Juvenal's speaker mischievously 'explains' her departure with the recollection of Jupiter's adult womanizing, immortalized for Roman readers by the early books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The reference to Jupiter as a child implies a two-stage Silver era, perhaps knowingly recalling Hesiod's account of the Silver men's transition from foolish children to hubristic adults (*WD* 130–5). Next, rewriting the departure of Pudicitia in metallic terms, Juvenal

⁹¹ The irony in Juvenal's portrayal of the primeval era was emphasized by Singleton (1972); it fuses *various* stages in Lucretius, Virgil and Ovid's accounts of civilization, and therefore, as Landolfi (1996) 160–3 observes, is not here labelled 'golden'.

trades on the tradition of an extended account of the Iron Age. He reworks Ovid's introduction to the Iron Age as if setting up a similarly detailed account (*Sat.* 6.23: *omne aliud crimen mox ferrea protulit aetas*; cf. *Met.* 1.128–9: *protinus inrupit . . . / omne nefas*), only to follow it with the restatement of adultery's origin in the *Silver* centuries (*Sat.* 6.24: *argentea saecula*). The implication is that adultery was the sin from which all others sprang, an effect borne out by the gradual shift, in the ensuing catalogue of complaints against women, from lust to other crimes (400–661). On the metapoetic level, too, the departure of Pudicitia signals the poem's own increasing revelations of female activity.⁹²

It has been noted that several poems in Juvenal's corpus engage the 'Astraea' motif, so prominent in post-Aratean versions of the races, of a good individual withdrawing from contemporary crime; Juvenal's most extended and ironic example is that of Umbricius leaving Rome in *Satire* 3.⁹³ In *Satire* 6, however, the gradual departure of Astraea along with Pudicitia (6.20: *hac comite*) may take the reader back beyond Aratus to the pair of goddesses, Αἰδώς and Νέμεσις, whom Hesiod's speaker predicts will abandon the Iron race (*WD* 197–200). There may be retrospective innuendo in the idea that Astraea and Chastity 'ran away together' (6.20: *duae pariter fugere*), given the focus on lesbian activity later on in the poem (311, 321–5). We may also find a Juvenalian reworking of a Hesiodic image in the reappearance of Pudicitia at the centre of *Satire* 6:

*Maura Pudicitiae ueterem cum praeterit aram;
noctibus hic ponunt lecticas, micturiunt hic
effigiemque deae longis siphonibus implent
inque uices equitant ac nullo teste mouentur.*

[ask yourself what notorious Maura's 'foster-sister' says to her] when Maura passes the ancient altar of Chastity. It's here that they halt their litters at night, it's here that they piss and fill the goddess's image with their powerful streams, and take it in turns to ride one another and thrash around with no man present. (*Satire* 6.308–11, trans. Braund)

⁹² Cf. Braund (1992) 75: 'the poem encompasses the flight, obsolescence, and disappearance of Pudicitia'; and Langlands (2006) 56: 'the very moralising calls attention to the fact that the poem is itself pissing on *pudicitia*'.

⁹³ Motto and Clark (1965).

An alternative interpretation of *inque uices equitant ... ac mouentur* is that the women take it in turns to bring themselves to orgasm on the statue of Pudicitia.⁹⁴ Even if they simply 'expose' Pudicitia to a scene of lesbian sex, however, such insults update for contemporary Rome Hesiod's vignettes of Δίκη maltreated and scorned (*WD* 220–4, 258–62 – passages much quoted and discussed in antiquity) after the original outrageous acts (ὑβρις) in the Silver era (134) and the manhandling of Justice in the Iron Age (192).

With such thoughts in view, it is striking to see that this *Satire* has long provoked debates and judgements very reminiscent of those on the perceived lack of structure in the *Works and Days*. In particular, each speaker has been accused of only intermittent focus on his original plan.⁹⁵ This may be illustrated by the pattern of references to the initial addressees of each poem. Perses is prominent in the first half of the *Works and Days* but thereafter fades out, reappearing only briefly just before and within the warning against sailing (*WD* 611, 633, 641). Juvenal's speaker points out the moral of Pudicitia's departure, the antiquity of adultery, to Postumus (*Sat.* 6.21), named again at v. 28 as a potential husband who would do better to commit suicide (30–2). Thereafter, the unnamed interlocutor who 'feeds' the speaker questions or objections to knock down (38–40, 55–6, 136, 142, 161) may be identified with Postumus, but the name does not reappear until 377, when the speaker is describing the dangerous prowess of eunuchs. It may be inferred that Postumus ignores the advice not to marry, since a wedding is cynically described at 202–3 ('there is no point wasting the cakes') and the poem loosely charts the downward course of a marriage; one interpretation of the absence of his name, therefore, is that Postumus is no longer interesting now that he

⁹⁴ Nadeau (2011) 185–6 on these lines finds rape implied already in *micturiunt* and *longis siphonibus implent*, which he suggests refer respectively to female ejaculate and to the use of dildos; the former idea in particular seems far-fetched, let alone detracting from the force of the tricolon at 309–11.

⁹⁵ See pp. 44–5 above, and compare Courtney (1980) 259 on how the satirist is diverted from his plan. Coffey (1976) 129 describes *Sat.* 6 as an unstructured catalogue. By contrast, Anderson (1956) emphasizes the poem's beginning, middle and end and technique of 'proof by examples'. Perspectives on the poem's structure are summarized in Braund (1992) 71 nn. 1–2.

is 'no longer an outsider making a choice'.⁹⁶ Near the end of the poem, however, when Postumus has faded out, the speaker himself attempts to warn fatherless children to watch out for poisoned dishes: 'watch out for your lives' (630: *custodite animas*) and rebukes an interlocutor, Pontia, as 'cruellest of vipers' (641: *saeuissima uipera*).⁹⁷ Several critics have suspected, therefore, that Postumus has been killed off.⁹⁸

Indeed, the emphasis on death that frames the poem (31, 610–61) perhaps gives the character 'Postumus', whose name *may* recall the faithful husband apostrophized in Propertius 3.12,⁹⁹ a secondary resonance as a sinister 'speaking name', a warning for all contemporary husbands. The word may retain legal overtones, connoting one 'born after his father's death', or born 'after the will is made'.¹⁰⁰ So understood, it may reflect the poem itself and the wider dramatic moment of Juvenal's satiric books; he is always too late in speaking out against decline, for mankind's doom is already sealed.¹⁰¹ Alternatively (as in Virgil), it could be the superlative of *posterus*, signifying something like 'the end of the line'. Given that Postumus is first introduced in the Iron Age, it is as if the 'last-born' race of mankind has been made personal; we may compare the use of the addressee Persicus in *Satire* 11 and Corvinus in *Satire* 12 to evoke the luxury and legacy-hunting these poems respectively condemn, while in *Satire* 3, the character Umbricius ('shade' or 'ghost') flees Rome like the proto-constellation Virgo.

⁹⁶ W. S. Smith (1980) 327; cf. Braund (1992) 85 for the argument that Postumus' situation is kept in mind throughout, in a parody of the set-piece λόγος ἀποτρεπτικός γάμου ('dissuasion from marriage').

⁹⁷ W. S. Smith (1980) 328 perhaps overstates the case to describe this as 'a shouting match with ... Pontia', but he well notes that these personal intrusions into the narrative are a common device in Juvenal.

⁹⁸ See Winkler (1983) 191–2, W. S. Smith (1980) 323 on *Sat.* 6.610–61.

⁹⁹ Jones (2007) 90–1, noting also syntactical potential for identifying this addressee with the adulterer Ursidius addressed at 6.38 and 42.

¹⁰⁰ Ferguson (1987) 8–9 offers a brief list of 'appropriate' names in Juvenal; for Postumus, however, he notes the technical meaning and refers to Martial for a character Postumus as an amorous person.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Satire* 14, where the speaker predicts a father's death at the hands of his greedy offspring, and opines that as soon as young men have a beard, they are already beyond heeding moral advice (216–19); the satirist cannot get through. On this poem, I have profited from Geue (2013) 162–74.

In provoking these thoughts, Juvenal poses an extreme form of the eternal question for didactic poetry, 'whether the represented student actually learns the lesson'.¹⁰² As Servius wrote in the preface to his commentary on the *Georgics*, didactic poetry must be written 'to someone' (*proem* 129.9 Thilo: *ad aliquem*).¹⁰³ The way in which the named addressee stands in for the reader/listener and for 'everyman' is a prominent feature of the tradition of didactic poetry in the wake of the *Works and Days*, and one bearing continual variation. Like Ovid's framing of Pythagoras' speech in the *Metamorphoses*, the way in which Juvenal abandons the address to Postumus invites reconsideration of how the mixture of material in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, a striking juxtaposition of 'personal and universal', is motivated by and directed towards the behaviour of Perses, the kings, farmers, sailors or men in general (see above 2.2b). Hesiod describes in mythological terms the lot of mankind, followed by descriptions of the seasonal round of tasks and the standard experience of a farmer, ostensibly in order to urge the difficult Perses to accept his lot. Perses is recalled at *WD* 611 and addressed again at 633 in the contexts of his connection to Hesiod and an emphasis on his outstanding laziness. There is no easy way of making profit; Perses, occasionally praised, more often rebuked,¹⁰⁴ is urged to resemble the man who heeds good advice, and is reminded that the gods love the man who works, no matter what his initial fortune is (*WD* 295–316). The address to Postumus in *Satire* 6, by contrast, comes across as a cynical reconfiguration of the relationship between the addressee and 'everyman'. Juvenal's speaker strives to convey that the downward course of every marriage is inevitable and predictable. The problem with Postumus is precisely that he is

¹⁰² Lowrie (1995). The problem is of course not unique to overtly instructional texts: compare Watson (2003) 484 on the audience of the plea to flee to the Blessed Isles (Horace *Ep.* 16): 'How do members of an *impia aetas* (9), even the *melior pars* of them (15), abruptly become *pii* at the end of the poem?'

¹⁰³ Clay (1998) 38 notes that this commentary for the 'first and only time in ancient rhetorical theory' discusses the persona of both the author and the addressee ('instruction requires the persona of both a teacher and a pupil . . . So [Virgil] writes to Maecenas, just as Hesiod [wrote] to Perses').

¹⁰⁴ Tilg (2003) and Ercolani (2010) on *WD* 299 summarize scholarship on the changing address to Perses.

in danger of resembling every other hapless husband of the modern era; his masculinity is surpassed by eunuchs (376–8).¹⁰⁵

With the failure to rescue Postumus, Juvenal *Satire* 6 constructs the antithesis of the so-called ‘didactic plot’ thematized most explicitly by Lucretius, whereby the speaker leads the audience along a path to knowledge and the audience is transformed by the end of the poem.¹⁰⁶ For the lack of effective contact with the addressee in Juvenal, Ovid perhaps paves the way with his Pythagoras, who draws attention to the fact that he is getting carried away by inspiration (*Met.* 15.143–52, 176–7, 453–4).¹⁰⁷ I shall now focus on hints of the speaker’s loss of focus and control in *Satire* 6, which expands this process of discrediting the didactic speaker into what might be called a ‘satiric plot’ of self-directed monologue; no one gets the point.¹⁰⁸

6.3b *The descent into paranoia*

Modern scholars of Hesiod have been particularly provoked by West’s assertion that Hesiod (viewed as the oral compositor of the *Works and Days*) is ‘side-tracked’ by his train of thought, such that he loses the immediate focus of his address to Perses; the ‘myth of the races’ was cited as the prime example of this failure. Since then, an attack on ‘Hesiod’, now viewed as the persona of the ‘unreliable narrator’ (p. 49 with n. 28), has resurfaced, particularly in scholarship that sees a distinctly ‘satirical’ edge to the ‘hodge-podge’ of material in the *Works and Days*.¹⁰⁹ Most

¹⁰⁵ For Nadeau (2011) on this passage, Postumus reappears because the theme of eunuchs brings back that of the *pusio* (‘pretty boy’), urged as a substitute for marriage (33–7) when Postumus was last in the frame. Johnson (1996) 175–6 emphasizes that ‘there are no real men’ in Juvenal’s poem, contrasting e.g. the description of the acorn-belching husband of the primeval era (6.10). Cf. Smith (1989).

¹⁰⁶ On the didactic plot in general cf. Fowler (2000). ¹⁰⁷ Myers (1994) ch. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Compare Keane (2006) 107, cited above n. 65; displacement of the teacher is a ‘satiric didactic plot’.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Hunt (1981) 34. While his idea of Hesiod as deliberately mocking Perses is hard to swallow, it may be that Juvenal’s satire does parody ‘hodge-podge’ Hesiodic advice. A puzzling focus on female superstition, in *Satire* 6.511ff., has women taking literally extreme versions of the advice in the corresponding part of the *Works and Days* (e.g. 737ff.). The catalogue of soothsayers and astrologers (*Sat.* 6.511–85) then perhaps also caricatures ‘Hesiod’ (author of works on bird omens and constellations too) who gives absurd, scattergun advice, often involving water.

recently, Gideon Nisbet, in a professedly provocative analysis, has compared Hesiod's address to Perses and the kings to the 'artfully chaotic anti-structure' of Juvenal *Satire* 6. Nisbet describes 'Hesiod' as a Juvenalian 'comically self-deflating narrative *persona*' who mishandles argumentative illustrations such as the αἶνος of the hawk and the nightingale for the kings.¹¹⁰ This knowingly improbable reading is framed as a reaction to West's scholarly but 'closed' reading of Hesiod as wisdom literature. In fact, a 'satiric' mode was noted in the *Works and Days* long before West wrote his commentary.¹¹¹ Still, only recently has the shift from biographical criticism to persona theory in scholarship on Roman satire¹¹² explicitly been applied to reading 'Hesiod' as a speaker.

Independently, analyses of Juvenal *Satire* 6 as a rhetorical representation of *indignatio*¹¹³ have considered how the speaker's invective causes him to lose credibility with the reader.¹¹⁴ The final turn to mythical *exempla* (e.g. 'there is no street which does not have its Clytemnestra', 6.656) has been judged a 'confusion' of myth and reality that marks the final straw in the self-deflation of the narrative persona.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the idea that one meets murderous tragic women in every street is not wholly unlike the insistence of Ovid's Pythagoras that any of your meat meals could be a Thyestean banquet (*Met.* 15.462).

Susanna Braund, however, locates the moment at which Juvenal's readers would really become suspicious of the speaker's rationality much earlier, when it emerges that he could not endure

¹¹⁰ Nisbet (2004) 156–9, comparing both *Sat.* 6 and the character of Umbricius in *Sat.* 3.

¹¹¹ Rand (1911) 141–2, 160–5, finding 'Horatian urbanity' in Hesiod's mixture of narrative modes.

¹¹² However, following Highet (1954), recent biographical 'explanations' of the length of *Sat.* 6 include Wilson (1995) (Juvenal, like Bob Dylan, had experienced a failed relationship) and Tennant (2002) (*Sat.* 4–6 arise from Juvenal's frustration with the degradation of the patron-client relationship).

¹¹³ On the rhetorical features of anger in Juvenal, see Braund (1996) 18–21. Compare Schmidt (1986) and Lardinois (2003) on the *Works and Days* as a stylized representation of an angry speech.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Winkler (1983) 218–19, citing the hackneyed railing against mothers-in-law (*Sat.* 6.231–41). He compares the deployment of Umbricius in *Sat.* 3, whose 'lack of control' Braund (1988) 12 also takes to indicate unreliability.

¹¹⁵ E.g. Freudenburg (2005) 86–7. On Juvenal's use of myth to explore the boundary between reality and unreality in the satiric genre, cf. Pollmann (1996).

even the perfect wife (*Sat.* 6.166: *quis feret uxorem cui constant omnia?*). Further, on Braund's analysis, the 'inappropriate' details in Juvenal's account of the primeval era with its mountain wife 'often more unkempt than her acorn-belching husband' (10: *saepe horridior glandem ructante marito*) function as an early hint that 'the speaker is a foolish and inconsistent man'.¹¹⁶ With this claim in view, it is worth considering more broadly whether the tradition of rewriting the 'myth of the races' has a role to play in Juvenal's wider appropriation of Hesiod's speaker for satire.

The *topos* of the reign of Saturn (*Sat.* 6.1) signals at the start¹¹⁷ the sheer literariness of the frame in which Juvenal is working,¹¹⁸ and without doubt, the portrayal of the mountain wife, by challenging readers to judge *her* desirability, urges them to rethink the desirability of the life she and her husband lead.¹¹⁹ Others before and after Braund have found in Juvenal's implicit rejection of the 'Golden Age' ideal an ironical statement of his 'sphere of interest as a satirist'; that is, he deals in the lighter and darker shades of evil inevitable in civilization, rather than the possibility of absolute innocence.¹²⁰ The problem with such a rejection, as I anticipated in reading Ovid's Pythagoras, is that without this frame of reference and an absolute starting-point, the voice urging morality loses all grasp on a moral standard to which to hold his readers.

Nisbet, indeed, goes so far as to find a precedent for Juvenal's treatment of the 'Golden Age' in the *Works and Days* itself, asserting that *WD* 106 is the point at which the readers begin to treat Hesiod's claims to didactic authority with suspicion, because

¹¹⁶ Braund (1988) 19.

¹¹⁷ The story's use as an opening device is arresting, since the majority of its post-Hesiodic revisions present it *c.* 100 lines in, as in the *Works and Days*. Precedents, however, include Ovid's Pythagoras (*Met.* 15.75–82, 96–111) and (also in a didactic context) Babrius' appropriation of the metallic myth only to introduce speaking animals in the Golden Age (*Aesopic Fables*, proem 1–5, with Hunter (2014) 227–35).

¹¹⁸ Nardo (1973) and Wiesen (1989) 723ff. emphasize that the first female types in *Sat.* 6 are drawn from elegiac poetry rather than life. On Juvenal's literariness in general, cf. Fredericks (1979).

¹¹⁹ Keane (2002) well argues that the hirsute and fecund body of the cave-woman 'embodies' Juvenal's satiric *farrago* just as elegiac women figure that genre. On the readers' response to this image of the Golden Age, see Gold (1994), and on women's bodies in satire generally, see Gold (1998).

¹²⁰ I cite Singleton (1972) 165. Landolfi (1996) 159, too, notes that Juvenal does not 'believe' (*Sat.* 6.21 *credo*) in the traditional myth of ages.

this second account ‘rules out’ the Prometheus-Pandora story.¹²¹ Although such a literal view of the relationship between the two stories is only one of several options, as this book has already made clear (pp. 70–2), the framing of Hesiod’s narrative of human races as a *ἕτερο[ς] λόγος[ς]* is certainly picked up in both Platonic and Hellenistic texts as a signal of scepticism about its truth (sects. 3.3a–b, 4.2). We have also seen how Ovid’s Pythagoras ‘was not believed’ and undercut his own basis for argument. Despite the fact that for Hesiod overall there appears to be at least as much evidence for an ancient association with truthfulness as with lies (cf. ch. 1 n. 37), these points support the idea that Juvenal now exploits for satire an existing association, albeit surely a *post*-Hesiodic one, between an account of metallic ages and provocatively tendentious argumentation.

The story’s connection to the rest of the *Satire* is a case in point. Although Juvenal in *Sat.* 6.1–24 certainly asserts the antiquity of adultery, it is something of a red herring, in that it is by no means obvious from these lines that *female* lust/infidelity will be attacked in the satire.¹²² Pudicitia can be a male quality too,¹²³ and in fact the initial focus on Jupiter (15–16) and Ursidius, ‘most notorious of adulterers’ (42: *moechorum notissimus*) suggests that male infidelity, rather than female crimes, will be criticized. Only when it emerges that Ursidius is looking for a wife ‘of old-fashioned morals’ (45: *antiquis . . . de moribus*) does the speaker begin to assert explicitly the impurity of the modern woman.

The awkwardness of the fit between the prologue and the poem’s wider presentation of contemporary women may be viewed as a hint that it is Juvenal’s choice to connect the two themes, as itself an ‘experiment in satiric strategy’.¹²⁴ I shall suggest that Juvenal’s demonstration of how the didactic speaker has lost the (didactic)

¹²¹ Nisbet (2004) 155, also finding an unfulfilled promise of brevity in *ἐκκορυφώσω* (*WD* 106)!

¹²² Although the initial picture of primeval humanity focuses on women, as Winkler (1983) ch. 2 notes.

¹²³ Famously, Nero ‘prostituted his own chastity’ (*suam pudicitiam prostituit* Suet. *Nero* 29.1). See Langlands (2006) on *pudicitia* as a key term through which Romans debated the difference between men and women.

¹²⁴ The phrase is that of Braund (1982) 170, emphasizing that it offers a better perspective on Juvenal’s changing persona through the *Satires* than do psychological explanations.

plot is founded in his connection of the races tradition to a misogynistic filtering of Hesiodic 'poetry about women'. I shall return to the *Octavia* for further hints of the female paradigms appropriated by characters in 'Hesiodic' mode.

6.3c Constructions of misogyny

While Juvenal's poem has a far narrower focus than the tradition of misogynistic writing outlined by Stobaeus in the subsection of his *Anthology* headed 'Censure of Women' (4.22.7: ψόγος γυναικῶν),¹²⁵ it certainly teases readers with the 'rhetoric of misogyny';¹²⁶ in other words, the way in which the literary tradition constructs negative female characters. The three dominant characteristics of the modern woman, according to Juvenal, are, above all, lust (several times expounded), followed by deceitfulness (in which the mother-in-law provides training, *Sat.* 6.231–41) and a predilection for luxury (475–511, reiterated in the 'second proem' of 286–300, esp. 293: *luxuria incubuit*).

Each of these assertions about women is both fashionable and of long standing. The contemporary rule of *luxuria*, at least, is frequently found in Roman accounts of the ages, not least those of Ovid (who, as we have seen, repeatedly plays on the discovery of gold in the Iron Age) and the *Octavia* (see *Oct.* 432–3, cited above [sect. 6.2a](#), on the current dominance of *libido* . . . *potens* along with *luxuria uictrix*).¹²⁷ In the *Octavia*, the foregoing 'Hesiodic' narrative of races and ages may prompt a further reminiscence of Hesiod here. *luxuria* is introduced first as the greatest evil and a *pestis blanda* (*Oct.* 427) – a phrase which recalls the καλὸν κακὸν of Pandora (Hesiod *Theogony* 585), herself a luxurious object (573–84) and ancestress of the 'tribes of women', who are 'companions of surfeit' (*Th.* 593: σύμφοροι . . . κόροιο).

¹²⁵ Braund (1992) 71–3 notes e.g. the absence of both animal comparisons and the figure of the witch; she argues that the opening emphasis on Pudicitia (on which cf. Anderson (1956)) signals a narrower focus on marriage and adultery borne out by the poem as a whole. On the question of whether a negative view of women overcomes the focused advice to Postumus, see Gold (1994) v. W. S. Smith (1980).

¹²⁶ My italics, but the phrase is from Battisti (1996) *La retorica della misoginia*.

¹²⁷ On the play's repeated condemnation of *luxuria* (also at 433–4, 624–8), cf. Fitch (2004) 513.

In this perspective, the terms in which the second traditional female fault is asserted later on in the *Octavia* are striking. Nero, as he orders the killing of Octavia for allegedly prompting a revolt, pronounces on the innate deceitfulness of women:

*mulier, dedit natura cui pronum malo
animum, ad nocendum pectus instruxit dolis.*

A woman, to whom Nature gave a mind prone to evil and equipped her heart with deadly tricks. (*Octavia* 868–9)

The idea of Nature’s furnishing women with craftiness is reminiscent of this emphasis in the account of Pandora’s creation in the *Works and Days*, different from that of the *Theogony*; Athena is instructed to teach her the works of weaving (*WD* 64), and Hermes to bestow upon her ‘the mind of a bitch and a thievish character’ (κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπὶ κλοπὸν ἦθος 67 – cf. also 77–8).

The misogynistic inspiration provided jointly by the two Hesiodic stories of Pandora already in the archaic period is evident in the famous iambic poem of Semonides (fr. 7 West) cataloguing ten animal- /material- types of women, all bad characters except the one made ‘from the bee’. It has long been argued that Hesiod’s Pandora, created from earth (*Th.* 571), or earth and water (*WD* 60–1), and with the mind of a bitch (*WD* 67) is variously recalled in *several* of Semonides’ women (bitch-woman, earth-woman, sea-woman and sow-woman, who rolls in mud and is an ignorant consumer), as if to emphasize the plurality of the female ‘tribes’ (φῦλα γυναικῶν *Th.* 591) to which Pandora gives rise, in contrast to the singular γένος of men.¹²⁸ The bee-woman described at the end of the list reverses not only the drones represented by all the others, but also elements of Pandora.¹²⁹ This may be interpreted as a sinister mirage of perfection, as it were again ‘tricking’ Semonides’ readers/listeners into the perspective of the male recipients (mankind or Epimetheus) who do not see the destructive potential of Zeus’s gift, since Semonides in conclusion reasserts

¹²⁸ See first Loraux (1978) 54–7; I would add to her analysis that Semonides’ mare-woman, who is always wearing perfume and flowers (7.64–8), recalls Pandora’s luxurious aspect from the *Theogony*.

¹²⁹ See Hunter (2014) 161–4, who rightly notes that in content and emphases the poem and its frame recall elements from *both* Hesiodic poems.

that men are continually tricked by their own wives and warns that the wife who is apparently the most prudent behaves the worst (7.108–17).

It is no coincidence that *WD* 67 and *Th.* 591–3 are among the few Hesiodic passages found, like Semonides’ poem, in the section on *φόγος γυναικῶν* in Stobaeus’ anthology, which also transmits a line from the *Works and Days* warning that whoever trusts women, trusts ‘thieves’ (φιλήτησιν *WD* 375). The vice of lust, which becomes the major theme in Juvenal, is similarly prominent in Semonides’ catalogue (see especially the ass-woman and weasel-woman, 7.48–54); only the bee-woman prefers (apparently, at least!) not to be among those discussing sex (7.90–1). We may here recall the fertility-with-chastity of women in Hesiod’s Just City (*WD* 235), a motif whose reception extends into Latin poetry.¹³⁰ Again, insofar as an emphasis on female sexual appetite stems from any positive assertion in Hesiod, it would not be as much from the *Theogony* as from the description of midsummer in the *Works and Days*:

τῆμος πιόταταί τ’ αἶγες, καὶ οἶνος ἄριστος,
μαχλόταται δὲ γυναῖκες, ἀφαιυρότατοι δὲ τοὶ ἄνδρες
εἰσὶν, ἐπεὶ κεφαλὴν καὶ γούνατα Σείριος ἄζει.

at that time goats are fattest, and wine is best, and women are most lascivious – and men are weakest, for Sirius parches their head and knees. (*Works and Days* 585–7, trans. Most)

This theme was taken up with alacrity and adapted for the context of early Greek sympotic poetry (cf. Alcaeus 347 Voigt);¹³¹ we cannot be sure that this male environment was the performance context also of Semonides’ poem – it may already have been part of a wider tradition of ‘blame poetry’ sung at midsummer festivals¹³² – but what is certain is that it became one of the most cited passages from Hesiod in antiquity.¹³³

Such popular passages, reworked and intertwined by Semonides and others, begin the process of forming a selective image of

¹³⁰ See La Penna (1962) 243 on Horace’s application of the idea to Rome in *Odes* 4.5.23.

¹³¹ For analysis of Alcaeus’ likely reworking of Hesiod, see Hunter (2014) 123–5.

¹³² See Petropoulos (1994), suggesting a link to Archilochus’ Cologne Epode (fr. 196).

¹³³ Koning (2010) 143, 155.

‘Hesiod’. Semonides’ ‘reading’ of the poem amplifies a few elements in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* and *Theogony*; it has been argued too that it ‘unpacks the consequences’ of the objectifying perspective of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, which, like Semonides’ poem, closes with Helen – a poem of ‘ordering women’ is revealed to be a poem of disorder.¹³⁴ On the issue of Hesiod’s women, however, explicit ancient references to Hesiod judge differently than do poetic ‘readings’ or parodies of his poems.¹³⁵ Hesiod was noted in antiquity to have focused more on women than did Homer, but Dio Chrysostom’s description of the *Catalogue* expresses this focus in the standard critical language relating to epic poetry: Hesiod ‘celebrated the female in song’, whereas Homer ‘praised men’ (*Orat.* 2.13: τὴν γυναικωνίτιν ὕμνησε, παραχωρήσας Ὀμήρῳ τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐπαινέσαι). We find a similar expression in Lucian’s *Conversation with Hesiod*, summarizing the contents of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* as ‘the virtues of women’ (*Hes.* 1.12: γυναικῶν ἀρετάς). It has been noted, too, that the popularity of statements about reciprocity and social behaviour from the *Works and Days*, in particular, led to Hesiod’s being considered an expert on *φιλία* between neighbours, parents and children, and husband and wife.¹³⁶ There is, by contrast, ample ancient testimony that Euripides, as the *Suda* entry explicitly states, ‘had a reputation for hating women’ (μισογύνης ἐδοξάσθη).¹³⁷ While fully assenting to the *potential* of reading misogyny in Hesiod, therefore, I would argue that modern critics should not be axiomatic about ‘Hesiod’s negative view of women’, if they are to acknowledge a more multidimensional and/or evolving ancient reception.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ R. Osborne (2005) 24.

¹³⁵ On the different directions taken with the *Catalogue* in Hellenistic poetry, see Asquith (2005).

¹³⁶ For the evidence ranging from Theognis through Aristotle to Plutarch, see Koning (2010) 179–82.

¹³⁷ Most explicit and memorable is Aristophanes *Women at the Thesmophoria*, in which the women conspire to ruin Euripides because of his misogyny. Note too that the dominant sources in Stobaeus’ *ψόγος γυναικῶν* are Menander, Euripides and Semonides.

¹³⁸ On this aspect of the *Works and Days*, see recently Canavero (2013). *pace* Lamberton (1988) 101 (building on Arthur (1982) and Sussman (1984)): ‘although it is possible to point to certain contradictions within the Hesiodic representation of women, there is general agreement that Hesiodic misogyny runs deep’, scepticism is expressed at least by Arrighetti (1981).

In fact, the *Works and Days*, like the *Theogony*, presents a dual picture. A good, thoughtful wife balances out the evils for the man who has her (*Th.* 608–10). More starkly:

οὐ μὲν γάρ τι γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ ληΐζειτ’ ἄμεινον
τῆς ἀγαθῆς, τῆς δ’ αὖτε κακῆς οὐ ρίγιον ἄλλο.

A man acquires nothing better than a good wife, but nothing more chilling than a bad one. *Works and Days* 702–3 (trans. Most)

This passage, also picked up by Semonides (fr. 6 West = 1 Pellizer-Tedeschi), is followed up in Hesiod’s poem by emphasis on the qualities of the bad wife,¹³⁹ but the expression of a dichotomy is an important thematic element of the world of the *Works and Days*, right from the opening emphasis on a double Strife, a bad one and a good one, who encourages men to work, and who here receives more attention from the poet, as protreptic for Perses (*WD* 11–24). Here and elsewhere in the poem, dual potential is linked to a female personification. Indeed, so pervasive is the idea of women as extremes or paradigms of good and bad that Hesiod uses it at the conclusion to his poem as a metaphor to summarize his characterization of days: ‘One time one of these days is a mother-in-law, another time a mother’ (825–6: ἄλλοτε μητρυνὴ πέλει ἡμέρη, ἄλλοτε μήτηρ / τᾶων).¹⁴⁰

In terms of ideas of ‘Hesiodic women’ (re)built out of popular passages, we should remember, too, the comparative popularity of Hesiod’s vignette of Δίκη physically abused. I suggested above that this tradition found its way into Juvenal in the form of a statue of Pudicitia maltreated. If this is right, Juvenal in making lustful women piss on Pudicitia plays off against each other images of women derived ultimately from Hesiod. To some extent this is seen in the *Octavia*, too, whose choruses of Roman citizens tend to polarize women in terms of virtues and vices; we hear of Virginia, Lucretia and the wicked Tullia (*Oct.* 294–308), and in conclusion of Agrippina, Livia, Julia and Agrippina (932–57), all

¹³⁹ Canavero (2013) 189–90 finds the terms of this expansion reminiscent of the Iron Age.

¹⁴⁰ Compare in this context the continuing debate about Pandora in the *Works and Days*; Fraser (2011) emphasizes her ambiguity, qualifying the emphasis of Zarecki (2007) on association with Good Strife, as part of Zeus’s plan to maintain the balance of good and evil in man’s fate.

unjustly punished like Octavia herself.¹⁴¹ The Hesiodic figure of Δίκη 'dragged' by men who 'pronounce crooked verdicts' (*WD* 220–1) is evoked in a context recalling that Hesiod's Δίκη was a source for Aratus' Maiden/Astraea. Nero conceives of Octavia as a Pandora-figure; Octavia, however, physically dragged onstage a few lines later (899: *quo me trahitis?*), is a would-be Astraea, wishing for wings on which to flee her sorrows and the 'grim gatherings of men and savage murder' in contemporary society (*Oct.* 918–20).¹⁴²

Returning to Juvenal, then, my understanding is that the speaker's presentation of women in *Satire* 6 does not simply take over misogynist passages in Hesiod; rather, Juvenal's poem, like that of Semonides, has the effect of *constructing* Hesiod as misogynistic by splicing and recombining ideas found first in Hesiod. I am not arguing that Juvenal 'read' Hesiod in any careful way; rather, that the satirist re-jumbles various much-cited passages from Hesiod, including memorable pronouncements about women, into a 'Hesiodic' context of urgent parainesis. It is not clear whether Juvenal read Semonides, but we can point to such (pseudo-?) performative receptions of Hesiod as precedents; certainly, it seems that Semonides was the first to exaggerate the mockery of the cuckolded husband, found all over Juvenal *Sat.* 6, out of a single line in Hesiod (*WD* 701: μή γείτοσι χάρματα γήμης; 'watch out that you don't cause merriment for your neighbours through your marriage').

As should now be clear, the misogynistic 'Hesiod' effectively rebuilt by Juvenal is a fusion of several Hesiodic legacies. The catalogue of female crimes¹⁴³ constituting the body of Juvenal's poem presents an ironic, updated recasting of the catalogue of women beloved by gods in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, as well as the love of luxury and deceit briefly connected with women in the *Theogony* and, intermittently, in the *Works and Days*.

¹⁴¹ In the body of the play, however, a clear distinction between justice and injustice is harder to maintain; we think not only of Nero's sophistic victory over Seneca, but also of the revenge/justice predicted for Nero by the Fury-like Agrippina (*Oct.* 593–645).

¹⁴² Her resemblance to Astraea *uirgo*, described by Seneca at *Oct.* 424, is noted by Boyle (2008) on *Oct.* 918–20.

¹⁴³ So termed in e.g. W. S. Smith (1980) 323, Winkler (1983) 147, Wilson (1995).

Awkwardly juxtaposing this overview with a myth of metallic ages, *Satire* 6 teases readers with the satirist's version of a cumulative 'Hesiodic' moral – the history of humanity *is* that of the race of women; the narrative of the ages in the prologue of *Satire* 6 slides into catalogue. It has been said that women form a 'supplementary topic' to Juvenal's first book of *Satires*;¹⁴⁴ like the Hesiodic *Catalogue* itself, then, his second book, consisting only of *Satire* 6, is designed to resonate with an already-existing corpus.

Indeed, this thought is implicit in the fact that the Hesiodic *Catalogue* itself began from an image of primeval harmony between gods and men which recalls the Golden Age and the days before the sacrifice at Mekone (fr. 1.3–4 M–W – cf. *WD* 109–20 and *Th.* 535–87). All these Hesiodic histories of humanity emphasize our disjunction from the world of mythical ancestors. By contrast, the stories of Pandora in both the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* are explicitly aetiologies (for the present-day misery and necessity of hard work). On one reading, Juvenal does not sign up to the aetiology of Pandora. For primeval woman, according to Juvenal, was not desirable ('not like you, [elegiac] Cynthia' (*Sat.* 6.7: *haut similis tibi, Cynthia*). Lust, the defining female crime in *Satire* 6, now affects all classes of women (349: *iamque eadem summis pariter minimisque libido*) but is said to stem from the later advent of *luxuria* (286–300).¹⁴⁵ Women in archaic times were *not* as they are now. On another reading, however, the later advent of *luxuria* can itself be seen as equivalent to the belated arrival of Pandora in the narrative of mankind. Meanwhile, the speaker's deteriorating didactic persona belies any belief in his premises. Shifting between the discursive modes of narration, instruction and catalogue, the speaker's misogyny itself forges the link between diachronic history and an account of women, 'the family of Pandora'.¹⁴⁶ The man's irrationality and anger is precisely what he claims to deplore in the female sex.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Henderson (1999a) 197.

¹⁴⁵ Comparing the prologue of *Sat.* 6 with 6.286–300, Bellandi (1991) 124 concludes that each treatment is ironic but represents the same criticism of contemporary political values.

¹⁴⁶ So Casanova (1979) titles his study of Pandora's variations in the three main Hesiodic poems.

¹⁴⁷ So Freudenburg (2005) 88.

It is worth noting that Juvenal *Satire* 6 is not without a relatively near precedent in uncomfortably connecting an account of the primeval era both with a self-undermining speaker and with misogynistic invective. The hyper-chaste Hippolytus in Seneca's *Phaedra*, responding to the suggestion of Phaedra's Nurse that he allow Venus into his life, outlines his ideal existence – 'which abandons cities and loves the woods' (*Phaedra* 485: *quae relictis moenibus siluas amat*) – connecting it with that lived by those in the 'first age' (526–7: *prima ... / ... aetas*). After describing the course towards the current age (540–59), he asserts that 'woman is the prince of evils. She, master of crimes, has besieged our minds' (559–60: *dux malorum femina. haec scelerum artifex / obsedit animos*). Asserting his hatred of women, he confesses that it may be irrational (566–7: 'I loathe, dread, shun and curse them all, be it reason, instinct, or wild rage': *detestor omnes, horreo fugio execror. / sit ratio, sit natura, sit dirus furor*). His misogyny undercuts his idea that he is primeval man personified, even before his readiness to hunt with weapons and to sacrifice undermine his identification with this 'innocent' model (*innocuus* 502 – contrast 498–503 with 706–9).¹⁴⁸

Juvenal goes much further than Seneca (and the author of the *Octavia*) in a mischievous reconstruction of a Hesiodic speaker as a teacher from whom no audience learns. The narrative of races is the trigger for the audience to recognize other features of the *Works and Days* reconstructed in *Satire* 6 as a failure of didaxis and a slide into disconnected monologue. We have also found in Juvenal a new suggestion of how Hesiodic poems, or at least themes, are fused in reception, for the connection between the Juvenalian prologue and the rest of *Satire* 6 now works as a focused expression of the idea that the *Catalogue* and the *Works and Days* deal essentially with the same theme. In retrospect, the moral that 'history is genealogy' may be seen operating also in the *Octavia* – Nero, himself adopted into the Julio-Claudian house, knows the importance of producing a natural heir, and, with his knowledge that Poppaea is pregnant, is secure in his own historical narrative.

¹⁴⁸ On this aspect of Hippolytus, cf. Boyle (1987) 25.

6.4 Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the revisions of the 'myth of the races' in the *Octavia* and Juvenal's *Satire* 6 signal ways in which these texts, albeit at a great distance, effectively unpack the hierarchies of teacher and pupil¹⁴⁹ set up by Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and re-evaluate the coherence of various Hesiodic themes. By considering these post-Augustan re-performances¹⁵⁰ of Hesiodic poems, I hope to have offered a focused illustration of the permeable boundaries between the genres termed 'didactic'¹⁵¹ and to have captured another dimension of the way in which satire, at least, presents its own evolution as a degenerate relative of epic and tragedy. Insofar as the 'myth of ages' is useful to the post-Augustan authors of historical tragedy and Roman satire, it seems to be functioning as a figure for cultural history, in which to express a sense of belatedness, an idea present more explicitly in our own scholarly periodization of Latin literature as 'Golden' and 'Silver'.¹⁵² One powerful account of the ending of *Satire* 6, in particular, emphasizes the speaker's 'free fall' into the world of myth, of (now) overwrought epic and tragic declamation, into the play he has staged; in a similar way, it is claimed, Flavian epic represents its own 'slip into oblivion'.¹⁵³

Admittedly, the features considered in this chapter in relation to Hesiod are generally attributed to other backgrounds. For example, the dramatic characterization in the *Octavia* was long considered through the lens of Greek or Senecan tragedy;¹⁵⁴ voices in

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Henderson (1991) 141 on Persius' 'Didactic Epic'. In Juvenal *Sat.* 6, the demise of traditional authorities is illustrated by the presentation of Quintilian as having no ready defence for the wife caught in adultery (6.279–84) – cf. Keane (2006) 133.

¹⁵⁰ Or at least potential performances: cf. e.g. Littlewood (2004) 172, Wilson (2003) 4–5 for possibilities. Juvenal's performativity is emphasized by e.g. Henderson (1999b) and Schmitz (2000).

¹⁵¹ Cf. Horace's *Sat.* 2.5 with Connors (2005) 135 for the coincidence of 'didactic' and 'satiric' labels.

¹⁵² Good remarks on such periodization in Hallett (1993) 45–8, although 'Silver Age' Latin emerged earlier than she supposes; a standard term by 1736 (Hinds (1998) 83), it probably originated with Erasmus. On the construction of the category 'Classical' in antiquity, cf. Schmidt (2000) 58 and n. 13.

¹⁵³ Freudenburg (2005); cf. Williams (1978).

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Harrison (2003). As Smith (2003) 391–3 notes, such studies have been to the *Octavia*'s disadvantage.

Juvenalian satire are, clearly, primarily indebted to Lucilius. Yet, as this chapter has argued, the performative elements in the *Octavia* and in Juvenal's *Satire* 6, considered as responses to Hesiodic ideas, are important in challenging the external audiences to evaluate their own perceptions of and relation to the speakers' utterances: 'lessons in reading are Roman satire's lasting didactic legacy'.¹⁵⁵

Such a finding makes sense in the context of the blurred boundary between 'dramatic' and 'literary' texts in Roman culture¹⁵⁶ which extends far beyond the 'script-writing' mentality of the age of Nero to which I pointed at the start of this chapter. Many kinds of poetry were performed on stage as well as published; scholars of Neronian literature have long demonstrated that the notion of a clear boundary between mimetic and non-mimetic modes of production and dissemination is untenable in Rome well before the Neronian period.¹⁵⁷ Even self-consciously 'written' texts are a form of social performance.¹⁵⁸ Reasserting this is valuable for the reception of Hesiod, in particular, since the self-assertion of 'Hesiod' as poet on Helicon, in *Theogony* 22–34, is the earliest extant example of an inscribed author as substitute for an actual, performing presence,¹⁵⁹ irrespective of the fact that Hesiodic poetry was evidently performed as well.¹⁶⁰ Again, gaps within the *Works and Days* itself have been attributed to its status as a performance 'in the theater of the mind'.¹⁶¹ By calling attention to ways in which Roman poets exploit the fluctuating status of the speaker and addressee in Hesiod's poem, this chapter has demonstrated that 'Hesiodic' voices continue to be important in the re-performance of Classical traditions in Rome.

¹⁵⁵ Connors (2005) 136; Henderson (1999a) too emphasizes that Juvenal *Satire* 6 exposes *readers'* prejudices.

¹⁵⁶ Habinek (2005) 2 and *passim* claims that if, for the Romans, all poetry was 'song' (*carmen*), the category of 'literature' is anachronistic.

¹⁵⁷ So, forcefully, Jones (2001), Littlewood (2004) and Cowan (2005). Clay (1998) 28–34 emphasizes the continued performance of Roman poetry.

¹⁵⁸ Habinek (1998) chs. 5 and 7 on Seneca's *Epistles*. ¹⁵⁹ Most (1993).

¹⁶⁰ See Ercolani (2010) 43–4 on possible first performance contexts.

¹⁶¹ Scodel (2012), cited at 125.

CONCLUSION

PLAYING 'HESIOD'

This study has revealed how much is missed by existing accounts of the significance of the 'myth of the races' for Classical antiquity. Hesiod's description of the Golden race fuelled the vision of a Golden Age of ease and peace, but ancient responses to Hesiod's races range far beyond nostalgia for a lost paradise or hope of its return. I have focused here on more subtle transformations of the narrative of the races in antiquity.

These are highlighted through renewed attention to the story's first extant presentation in the *Works and Days*, a text whose contents are frequently cited while their context remains obscure. Encompassing stories, allegorical images, threats, assorted proverbial wisdom and practical instruction, the argumentative course of Hesiod's exhortation to Perses and the kings is by no means easy to understand, and is rarely taken into account in scholarly notes on the cultural wealth of its component parts. At least in the case of the 'myth of the races', however, the context is not always irrelevant. The place of the sequence within the *Works and Days* is a point repeatedly probed, exploited and reconstructed by later writers. Considering the most detailed responses to this narrative therefore furthers understanding of how Hesiod's poem was read and interpreted in ancient Greece and Rome; my first chapter aimed to outline prominent points of reference and issues in both Hesiod's reception and in that of the races story.

My second chapter investigated the argumentative texture of the *Works and Days* as the frame for the metallic narrative. Attention to complexities of environment, audience, discursive mode and message within the poem underlines difficulties of understanding the immediate frame of the 'myth of the races': both *WD* 106–8 as an introduction, and the following story of the hawk and the nightingale. Within the presentation of the races, other complexities have been overlooked; the Silver race, in particular, is a crucial

stage in outlining for Perses the consequences of individual injustice, and in articulating the capacity and responsibility of 'Iron' humans to make a moral choice. Here, the speaker's voice, both authoritative and helpless, calls attention to an arresting fluctuation in voice throughout the text, a feature significant in its reception.

Over the four following chapters, I examined the reconfigurations of Hesiod's metallic presentation in three Platonic dialogues, in the *Phaenomenas* of Aratus and his Latin translators, in Ovid *Metamorphoses*, in the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* and in Juvenal *Satire* 6. In this sketch of the story's reception, Plato holds a particularly important place as the earliest extant post-Hesiodic author to engage several times with the full sequence of races. Both collectively and individually, the *Protagoras*, *Republic* and *Statesman* repeatedly recall features of the races and of their frame in Hesiod's text. Such echoes signal in these dialogues wider explorations of the Hesiodic project and the identification of points for 'philosophical' discussion.

A major thread in this book is the idea that in post-Hesiodic writers, evocation of the races may mark implicit evaluations and creative interpretations of the potential results of Hesiodic pedagogy. In sharing the burden of didaxis between a protagonist and interlocutors, Plato's transformation of Hesiod's means and ends in ethical education paves the way for other, equally bold moves by later writers. Aratus' 'myth of Δίκη' in the *Phaenomena*, for instance, functions to highlight a contrast between (direct) past and indirect (present) modes of communicating ethical lessons. Taken in context, its presentation indicates doubt as to how/whether the poem's audience will decode the constellation of the Maiden as a sign from Zeus. In the *Octavia*, the optimum moment for a Hesiodic exhortation has certainly been and gone. Nero's non-cooperation with Seneca reveals the potential for disobedience in the didactic addressee, during and after the didactic process. Nero also embodies a fusion of Hesiod's audiences, Perses and local tyrants, noted first in the studies of Plato's *Republic* and *Statesman*. Ovid's Pythagoras and Juvenal 6, by contrast, recast the universalizing movement in the *Works and Days* as a loss of focus from the speaker; they depict the tendency of didactic to collapse into monologue.

It is important to emphasize here that only with Aratus does this multifaceted response to Hesiod's races overlap with the acknowledged reception of Hesiod in what modern scholars term 'didactic poetry'. In Rome, this 'Hesiodic' tradition is represented by texts such as Lucretius *De rerum natura*, Virgil *Georgics* and Manilius *Astronomica*, none of which develops in detail a story of world ages or races. In this book, by contrast, I have devoted most space to works for which fewer scholars have cited Hesiod as the primary reference point. I have thereby identified in antiquity more oblique perspectives on what constitutes Hesiodic didaxis in terms of speaker, addressee, timing and organization of material. This 'meta-didactic' concern explains why, in the texts under consideration, the focus of interest is on Hesiod's imperfect races; the Silver men in particular represent the individuals for whom education is really urgent. Indeed, given the prevalence of the 'life under Cronus' / 'reign of Saturn' motif in Greek and Roman culture, it should not be surprising that those engaging with the metallic myth in detail should mark their interest in transitional races within the account by exploring when, how and/or to whom such myths are or could be told.

With these questions in view, it can be seen that both personal and universal elements in Hesiod's poetry are recaptured in extended responses to Hesiod's races. All the texts surveyed here draw attention in some form to the voice of the narrator or the figure of the primary addressee, but most suggest also ways in which the races in Hesiod contribute to a sketch of the whole cosmos. The most obvious example is the Elean Stranger's cosmic myth as part of an address to Young Socrates in Plato *Statesman*. A sense that Hesiodic myth constructs a world is present also, however, in Aratus' *Phaenomena*, its Latin translations and, especially, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In these texts, revisions of the races are seen to be central in responses to the Hesiodic corpus more broadly.

Two further points about the reception of Hesiod may here be spelt out. The first is that an arresting image in Hesiod provokes responses of many different kinds in antiquity. Details such as Silver children and grey-haired babies, for example, are creatively re-presented in more literal and in more metaphorical forms, sometimes within the same text. Second, and related to this, small details

in Hesiod may be expanded exponentially in reception (even if other emphases in the source text are neglected, as critics have noted). Especially productive for this book is the frame of the story in Hesiod as an 'alternative account'. Appearing repeatedly around mythical references to the races in Plato, this status characterizes the Platonic passages as a 'series of footnotes to Hesiod'. The motif is picked up obliquely by Aratus in connection with the races and is thematically developed in Ovid's accounts of creation.

The points of principle do not apply only to the ancient reception of Hesiod's races, of course, or to that of Hesiod. Although this study does claim to have uncovered new dimensions in the reception of the *Works and Days* in Greece and Rome, its study of the 'myth of the races' contributes more broadly to our understanding of later ideas of 'Hesiod' as a corpus, and beyond that to work on archaic hexameters classified into new forms of writing. As was emphasized at the start of this book, the extant responses to Hesiod's races are not the results of 'reception' in a passive sense, but represent the fruits of an active process of reading and rereading Hesiod's narrative in its context. It may now be added that this selective survey of the story's impact on Greece and Rome has aided an ongoing movement to unravel the linear concept of 'the/a [single] intellectual tradition'. The texts in this book present not one but many modes of reference to Hesiod and intervening developments. Considered collectively, they present a picture of intertextual reference which is less coherent, more flexible and more creative.

Within the *Works and Days*, Hesiod's sequence provides not only a provocation to explain human development, but also a model of intellectual evolution (bringing out the opposition between justice and injustice) and of a complex didactic application. The ancient responses to Hesiod's metallic myth are shown to appropriate these functions to map out future intellectual directions, including the formation of critical categories such as 'philosophy' and 'satire'. Revealing the extent to which Hesiod's argument is creatively reconstructed through responses to the 'myth of the races', this book has demonstrated that for the writers of ancient Greece and Rome, Hesiod's thoughts on *Works and Days* are more than just household words.

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